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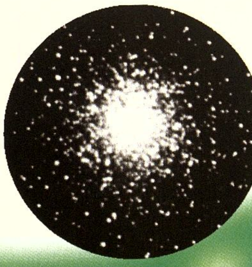

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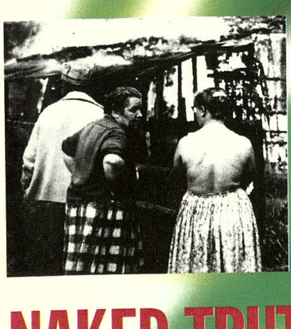

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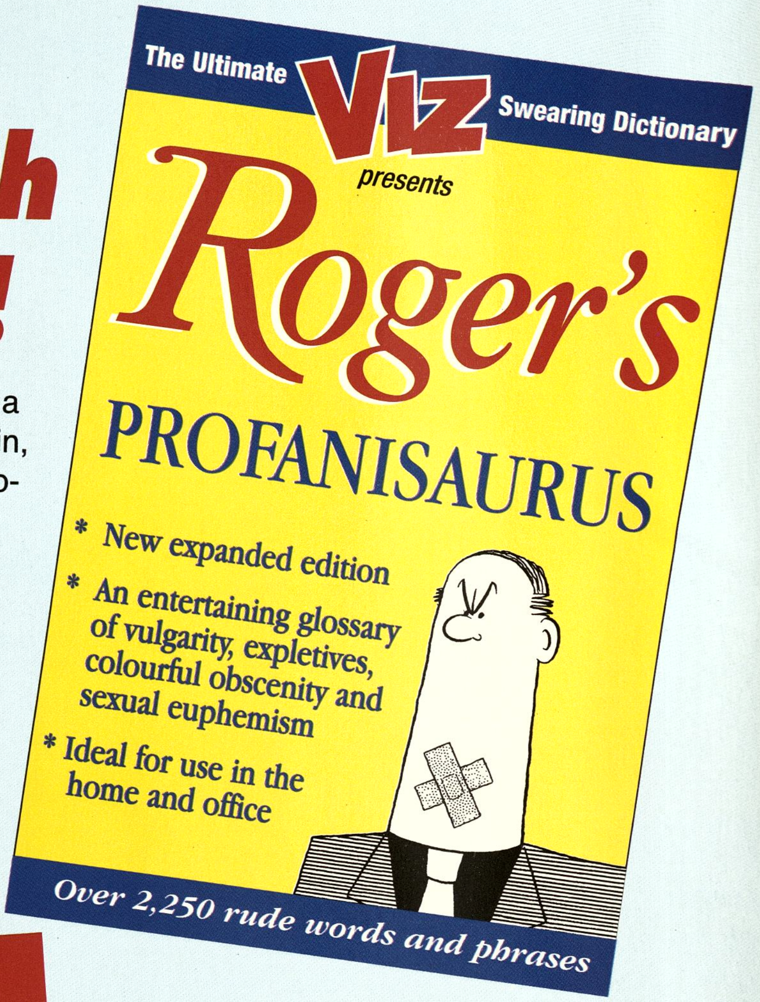
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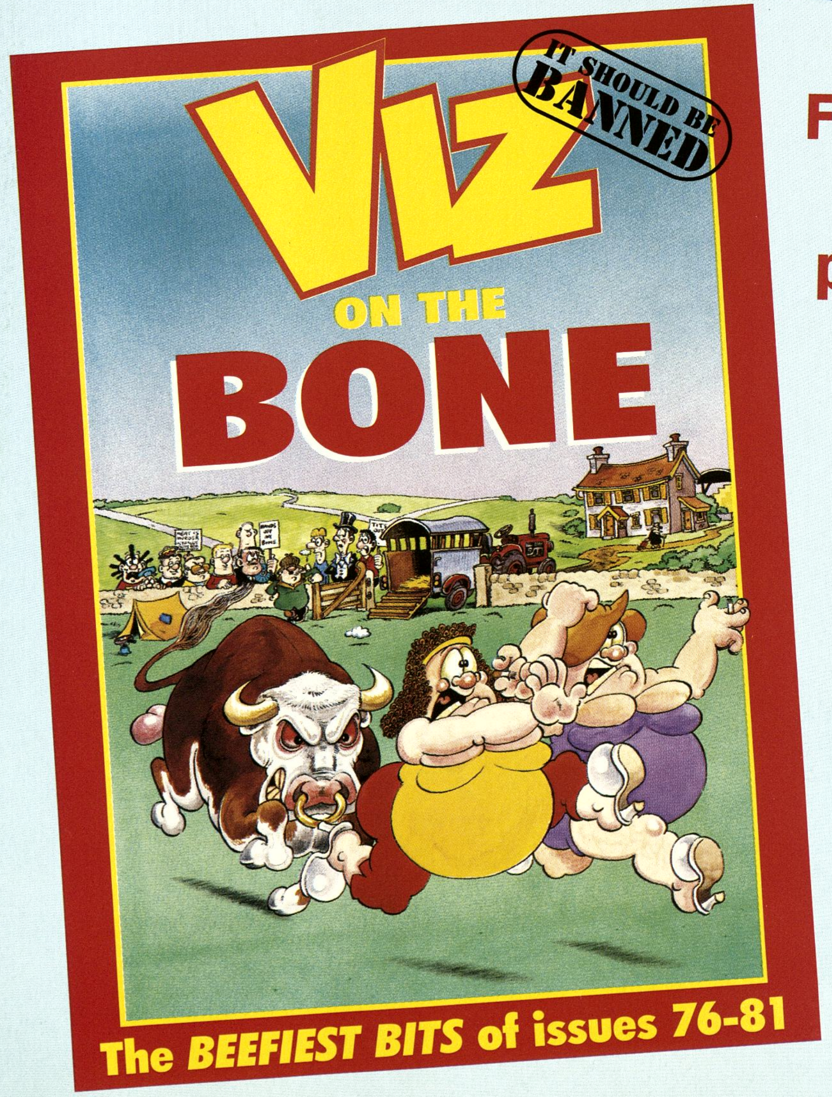
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CONTENTS

FEBRUARY 1999 No 119

REGULARS

ALEX HOWE

4
EDITORIAL

6
STRANGE DAYS
The pick of the weirdness crop...

22
FORTEAN BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
EQ Pegasi, Men in Black and strange snowfalls

47
FORUM
JUST THE FACTS
Checks and balances – Nick Warren
ODDLY NORMAL
No welcome in the hillside – Jenny Randles
SAUCERHEADS
The bell tolls for Art? – Bruce Lanier Wright

50
LETTERS

55
REVIEWS

60
READER INFO

61
THE HIEROPHANT
Taking the fortean pulse

66
PHENOMENOMIX

OFFERS

5 UNCONVENTION '99
The fortean event of the year
20 UK SUBSCRIPTIONS
Delivered direct to your door
32 MERCHANDISE
Books, T-shirts and more
54 US SUBSCRIPTIONS
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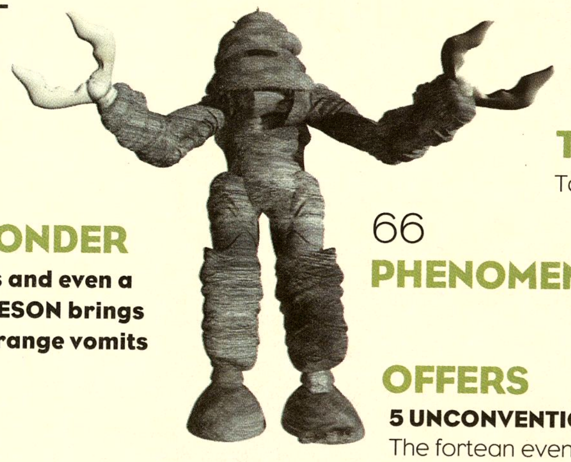
FEATURES

TOKOLOSHE BY PENNY MILLER/T.V BULPIN PUBLICATIONS (PTY) LTD

28
NAGS TO WITCHES
SIAN HALL and FRANS PRINS investigate the truth behind the headline-making witchcraft trials in South Africa


ALEXANDER TOMLINSON

JAMIE HEWLETT

34
CHUNDER WONDER
Snakes, frogs, toads and even a chicken – JAN BONDESON brings up the subjects of strange vomits

JAMES FLYNT/CHARLES HICKSON/WILLIAM MENDEZ

38
CLAW MEN FROM OUTER SPACE
STEVE SESSIONS re-examines one of the most famous of all abduction cases – the Lobster Men of Pascagoula

GEORGE DIACK/THE PROVINCE

44
NAKED CITY
Free spirits, devout believers or terrorists? IAN MORFITT exposes the Doukhobors of Canada

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EDITORIAL

FEBRUARY 1999 No 119

FLAMES OF FREEDOM

Harriot Mathebula told the hushed audience of South African officials of his part in the mob which put a burning tyre around the neck of an elderly man in Maila in 1990. "He was just an innocent old man. We didn't know what we were doing." More confessions followed from others who had murdered people they believed were witches. Then some survivors of witch-hunting mobs stepped up to tell of their terror and lucky escapes, urging other victims and their families to face and forgive their attackers.

This remarkable scene of reconciliation – that admirable characteristic of the Mandela government – took place in September 1998 at the five-day National Conference on Witchcraft Violence in Thohoyandou, in South Africa's Northern Province. Organised by the Commission for Gender Equity, – Ngoako Ramatlhodi, premier of the Province, said most victims are women and elderly – leading police, politicians, educators, human rights and welfare workers heard the Minister for Safety and Security, Sydney Mufamundi, declare it to be the first of its kind anywhere.

The conference was told that the association of witchcraft, crime and murder was inescapable. Nearly 600 people have been unlawfully killed as suspected witches in this province alone since 1990; the unofficial figure is probably higher. This does not include the very dark matter of the large numbers of people – many of them children – killed for *muti* (body parts used as amulets). Other related problems include the many thousands of cases of intimidation and blackmail of the accused 'witches'; the social marginalisation of their families and children; and the frequent destruction of their homes and property. For people already poor, this is an escalating social catastrophe.

Now serving 20 years for his crime, a remorseful Mathebula and others described the programme, run from their prison, through which they go out to talk to young gangs, trying to eradicate the mentality that seeks to solve social disputes by killing witches or that kills to order to supply *muti* ingredients.

While some delegates sought a solution in strengthening the country's 1957 Witchcraft Suppression Act, others pointed out that this provided no protection for the wrongfully accused. Credo Mutwa, a famous *sangoma* (traditional healer) thought poverty, unemployment and social deprivation were significant factors. He denied that murder was a traditional way of dealing with witches (in the old days they were shunned or driven out) and concurred with Mufamundi that it was a modern phenomenon, usually involving idle youngsters modelling themselves on the big city gangsters and terrorists. Mutwa himself was saved from certain death by the strength of traditional belief. Attacked by a mob, he lay bleeding and doused in petrol when he heard someone shout: "If you kill him, his ghost will haunt you." Thankfully, the mob fled. Today, Mutwa wants official status for traditional healers.

In this issue, Sian Hall gives us a glimpse into this world of paranoia and retribution, complete with shape-changers and magical animals. It forms the backdrop to one of the most difficult problems facing the new South Africa's legal system: how to harmonise the traditional community courts with the official judicial system, particularly over witch-related crimes.

Also in this issue, Ian Morfitt provides a little history of the Doukhobors, a group of Christian purists who left Russia to settle in Canada. Unlike the Heaven's Gaters and other millenarians, the new life sought by the Doukhobors was not seen to be on the other side of some end-of-the-world judgement; rather, like the Branch Davidians, they simply wanted the state to leave them alone.

It's time to start booking for the UnConvention; for the latest news see the ad on page 5. This issue mails out with *FortFlash*, our subscribers-only newsletter. It is just one of the advantages of subscribing and contains special book offers and other surprises. For readers in areas with limited distribution, subscribing will bring you the latest *FT* sooner and more reliably.

Paul Sieveking

FEATURE WRITERS THIS ISSUE

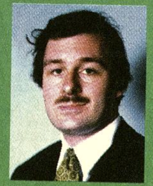
SIAN HALL AND FRANS PRINS

With degrees in Anthopology and English Literature Sian is the co-author of *Beyond Belief: Murders and Mysteries of Southern Africa* (1996). She is also busy researching a book on the paranormal in South Africa. Frans Prins is the head of the Anthropology Department at the Natal Museum, South Africa. Many of his research subjects frequently experience paranormal phenomena (ie ancestor spirit communications) and regard it as a normal part of their daily discourse.

STEVE SESSIONS

Originally from New York, Steve writes mostly horror fiction and is a member of the Horror Writer's Association and the American Folklore Society. A sceptic, he lives on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, researching local lore.

JAN BONDESON

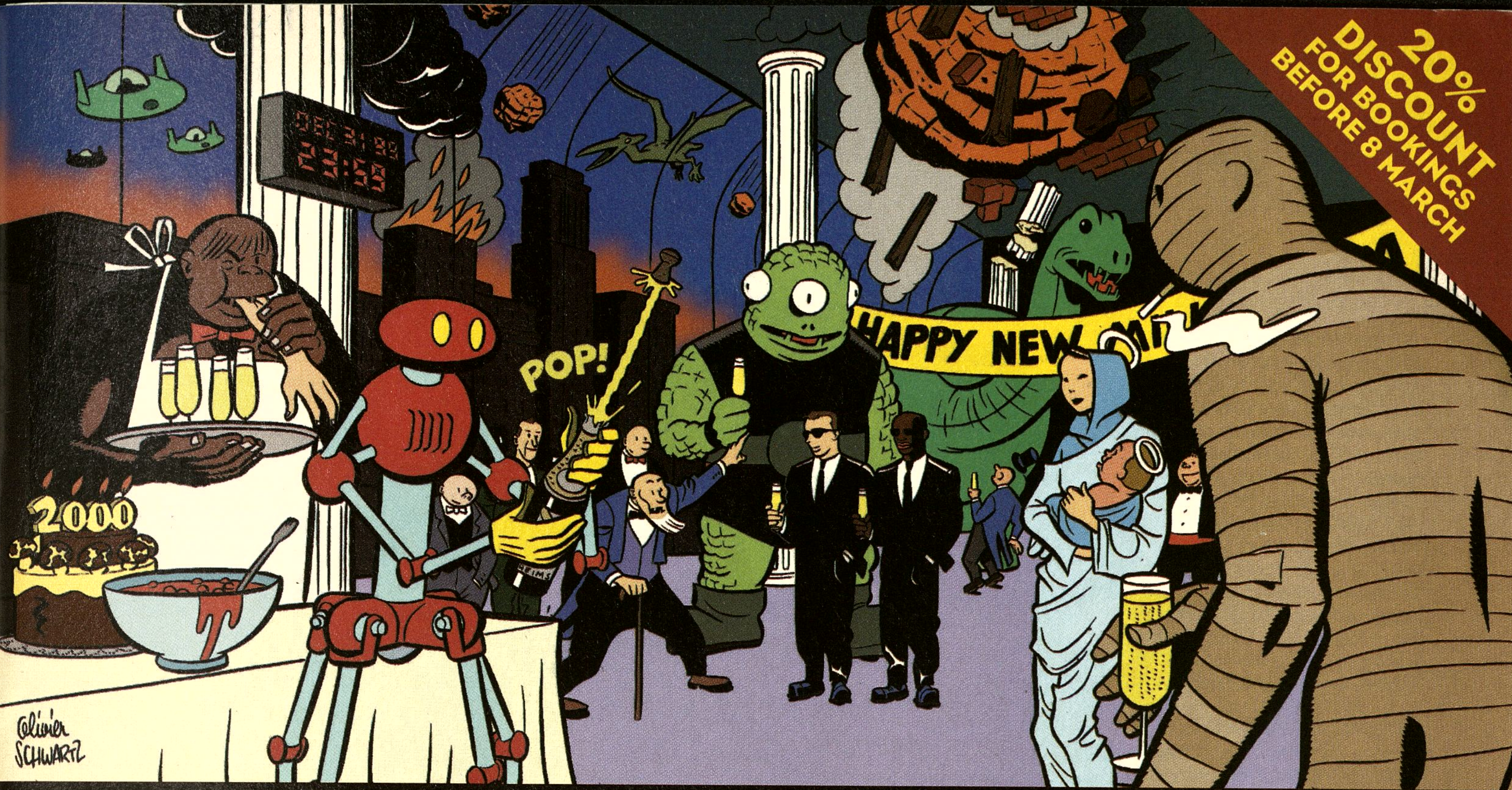


A physician, scientist and writer, he lives in London and carries out research into ways of treating rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory diseases. Interested in fortean topics for many years, he has publ;ished *Prolific Countess*, an historical study of multiple births, and *Cabinet of Medical Curiosities*, essays on medical horrors.

IAN MORFITT

Born and bred in Toronto, Canada, Ian studied drama at the University of Toronto, going on to perform throughout the US, Britain and Canada. As a writer he has contributed to such publications as *The Big Issue, Around the Globe* and *FT*. He is currently working on a British–North American English dictionary.

LISA ANDERS



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FURTHER SPEAKERS AND TOPICS TO BE ANNOUNCED NEXT ISSUE

CAVEAT: While all speakers have confirmed their intention to attend, we cannot guarentee their attendance on the day. Seating in some lectures and events will be limited - seats will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Doors open at 10.30am. **PRESS ENQUIRIES** to Margie Foskin on 0171 565 3270. **DEALER ENQUIRIES** to James Lyon 0171 565 3152.

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TOWER OF POWER: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the guru of Transcendental Meditation, plans to construct the tallest building in the world. The 666(!)-metre (2,185ft) Centre of India tower will be constructed near Jabalpur in Madya Pradesh state. Designed by the US firm that built the World Trade Centre in New York, it will be shaped like a giant pyramid and embellished with traditional Indian columns and arches. It will be built according to the dictates of Vastushastra, the traditional Indian art of geomancy, and could accommodate up to 60,000 Hindu scholars. *[AFP] 6 Nov 1998.*

GET OUT OF TOWN: Motorists in Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, have been locked out of their cars by a mysterious failure of their remote control keys. Cars have had to be towed to the edge of town before the central locking systems can be made to open. Locking the cars presents no problem. Electricity pylons, radio interference and winter weather have been blamed, but nobody has positively identified the source of the problem. *Times, 17 Nov 1998.*

FALSE ALARM: Three men had already set an alarm off twice trying to steal a Mercedes in Beirut, Lebanon – so they changed into nightshirts, approached the owner of the car and complained about the noise of the alarm so late at night, which was keeping them awake. As soon as the owner turned the alarm off, they jumped in and drove off. *Düsseldorf Express (Germany), 10 Nov 1998.*

MILK SHAKE: A Kenyan farm employee suffered two broken ribs and a dislocated shoulder after trying to milk an elephant, which had been browsing peacefully with her calf in Nyahururu, north-west of Nairobi. Suddenly realising she was being handled, the pachyderm indignantly tossed Peter Baraza, 21, into the air together with his half-filled can of milk. Badly wounded, he climbed a nearby tree, but she uprooted it with one violent tug and waved it in the air before flinging tree (and man) to the ground and stomping off to rejoin her calf. *Omaha Citizen, Daily Post, 31 Oct 1998.*

PURPLE RAIN: Blue rain fell on the northern Argentine town of Perugorria last September. Scientists say it was caused by ash from forest fires in Bolivia and Brazil which blew south and mixed with rain. *Observer, 25 Oct 1998.*

SHOPPING AROUND: Mediæval historian David Totterington has found a man called Tesco trading in Essex in 1086, when he appeared in the *Domesday Book.* He was listed as a burgess – another word for merchant. "Many things he sold could be found on the shelves of Tesco today," said Mr Totterington. *D.Telegraph, 14 Nov 1998.*

CORBIS

now with extra ingredients

PATRICIA HENDERSON, PREPARING a salad for her family, put her hand in a bag of Sainsbury's mixed herbs and took out a lettuce leaf to nibble. Putting her hand back in the bag for more, she felt something large, slimy and mobile. When she dropped it on a plate she was confronted by a live toad the size of her fist, which sat looking around the room. She ran into the garage screaming so much that she developed chest pains.

Mrs Henderson, 42, a teacher from New Harley, Northumberland, bought the salad at the Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, store and kept it in the fridge over the weekend before opening it on Monday. The bag's contents had been shipped in from Africa and packed in Britain by suppliers to Sainsbury's before arriving at its store where it was kept in a refrigerated compartment. "We have screening procedures which should have spotted something like this – especially at the weighing stage," said a spokesman. Sainsbury's promised to investigate. *D.Mail, D.Telegraph, 1 Oct 1998.*

MARIE HENRIQUES BIT into a Topic chocolate bar in April 1997. "When I came more or less to the end," she said, "I could not bite through. I took it right out of my mouth. I pulled the chocolate from round about it and found a grey, furry-looking object." It was slightly bigger than a 10p piece and she thought it was a peach seed. However, it turned out to be a dead mouse – to be precise, the crushed remains of a mouse's skull, blood-coated teeth and four vertebrae.

The snack had been bought for Ms Henriques, 32, by a work colleague at the Piccadilly News kiosk in Piccadilly Circus station. In Horseferry Road magistrates' court this October, Timothy Spencer for Westminster City Council said he was not suggesting that the mouse had been in the Mars factory in Slough, Berks, where the sweet was made; but he said that Fullers, a neighbouring company which Mars used to handle hazelnuts from a supplier in Turkey, had had an infestation of mice last year. Pest control officers had found more than 80 rodents in two months. Mars UK could face a £2,000 fine. *D.Mail, D.Telegraph, 20 Oct; Guardian, 26 Nov 1998.*

BRETT MARSHALL, 17, of Newark, Nottinghamshire, had already taken a bite from a Kit-Kat when he noticed a webbed cocoon on the outside of the bar. Then the green grub of a cocoa or meal moth (*Ephestia ellutella*) wriggled out onto the chocolate bar's surface. Nestlé Rowntree promised to investigate. *Newark (Notts) Advertiser, 2 Oct 1998.*

TRACEY NELSON OPENED a can of Tango in a Rotherham pub and a 1.5in (3.8cm) slug crawled out. Britvic promised to investigate. *Sun, 22 Sept 1998.*

NURSE HUI LAISHAN found a dead 6in (15cm) striped lizard (of the family *Lacertidœ*) in a cauliflower she bought at a Park'N' Shop outlet in Hong Kong on 24 February 1998. The supermarket's lawyer said the lizard was not classed as vermin and performed the useful function of eating insects and should be welcomed. *South China Morning Post, 30 Sept 1998.*

haunted by a not so holy ghost

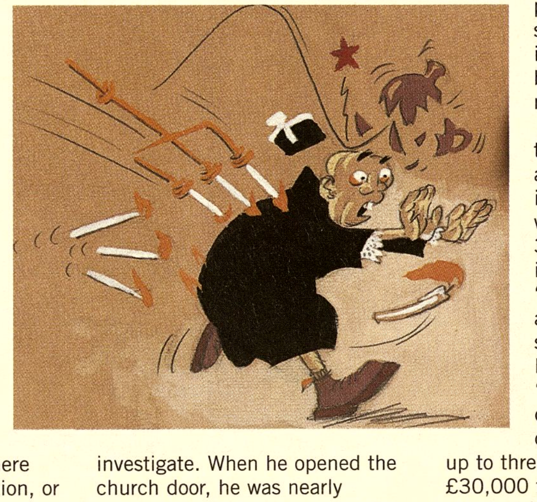
LAST OCTOBER, THE Haute-Saône village of Delain in eastern France (population 213) seemed to have a destructive poltergeist in the 18th century church of St Hubert. The disturbances began on 15 October after an altar in the church was moved a few inches to make more space for a visiting symphony orchestra. "A vase exploded all by itself just next to me," said a witness. "Then candles started flying between us very fast." Lightbulbs exploded and objects suddenly moved. On 19 October, the village priest, Bernard Garet, unlocked the church to find a statue of St Francis on the ground with candles arranged round it "in the shape of the Sun".

The mayor of Delain, Thierry Marceaux, said: "There was no collective hallucination, or 50 people will have to be sent to the lunatic asylum." He said that the orchestra gave its concert normally on 18 October, but that "the devils" resumed their work on the following day, even though the altar had been put back in place.

The Bishop of Besançon sent Max de Wasseige, a Franciscan friar and exorcism expert, to investigate. When he opened the church door, he was nearly brained by a flying altar candle and had to dash for cover. He held a prayer meeting with those villagers who had witnessed the phenomena, performing a blessing and an invocation of the saints.

Two days later, a statue of the Virgin Mary was found decapitated after worshippers heard a sound "like a gunshot" in the church. Soothsayers, freelance exorcists, sorcerers, witches and paranormal investigators sent advice or appeared in person, accompanied by a small army of journalists.

The police rejected theories of paranormal activity and simply interviewed witnesses. It was then that Marceaux, 32, confessed to organising the 'stunts' for an 'innocent laugh', but admitted that things soon got out of hand. He was arrested for "vandalism" and "false denunciation" – offences punishable by up to three years in jail and a £30,000 fine. On 29 October, he checked into a "specialist medical establishment" in an attempt to avoid the press. *[AFP] 21 Oct; Times, 23 Oct; Eve. Standard, 26 Oct; [AP] D.Telegraph, 30 Oct 1998.*



FABRICE

man with a bear behind...

A FAMED TYROLEAN climber claims to have solved the mystery of the Yeti in a new book, *Yeti – Legend and Reality*. Reinhold Messner (right), who climbed Everest without oxygen in 1978, reckons that the legendary cryptid is in fact the rare Tibetan Bear (*Ursus arctus*) suffering from an image problem. The long-haired bears, known as *chemo* to Tibetan mountain dwellers, can reach over 11ft (3.4m) in length, sometimes walk on two legs and carry their young on their backs. Nomads, Messner says, told him that the bears live primarily in woodlands at 12–18,000ft (4–6,000m), but in summer will travel far into the mountains, roaming mainly at night. The *chemo*'s diet includes berries, fruit, vegetables and meat – they kill goats, sheep and even yak – and they will often scavenge off humans.

Messner's idea certainly isn't new – the same explanation was given by German Ernst Schaefer in the 1930s – but, having been on the trail for 12 years after his own 1986 close encounter, he's convinced of its validity. He is, however, still open to the possibility of there being other Yeti-like creatures at large in the world, and remains respectful of local lore: "I'm sure that in 10 years time everybody in the world will say, 'The Yeti is a bear'. But I hope they will say nonetheless that it is also a great mythological creature."

Messner's certainty was challenged just a week later by Craig Calonica, a 45-year-old American "adventurer". Calonica claimed to have seen two creatures walking upright on the Chinese side of Mount Everest on about 17 September. Spotted on the descent from 21,300 (6,500m) to base camp at 17,000ft (5,400m), the mystery beasts had thick, shiny, black fur and were slightly hunched at the shoulders. "What I saw was not human... not a gorilla, not bear, not a goat and... not a deer," he stated. "Their arms were very long and their hands were very big."

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, the Yeti's American cousin, Bigfoot, was scaring campers in Hayfork, California, just 200 miles (320km) north of San Francisco. On 30 September, seven campers were disturbed by the terrifying screams of something large and furry lingering in the bushes near their tents. Going to investigate, Tim Ford, 22, and James Harmon, 28, saw a hairy beast about 9ft (2.7m) tall, with yellow eyes and arms that hung down past its knees. The creature allegedly left tracks 6in (15cm) wide and 20in (51cm) long. Local Department of Fish and Game officials said that they would not be investigating. *[R] 2+6 Oct; Times, 3 Oct; D.Mail, 14 Oct 1998.*

REUTERS/POPPERFOTO

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FREE AT LAST: Forestry officials in Quang Ngai province, Vietnam, discovered a soldier from the South Vietnamese army who had lived alone in the forest surviving on small game and berries for 19 years.

Dinh Van En, 60, from the ethnic Hre minority, was wearing a tattered loincloth, had forgotten how to speak Vietnamese and could only communicate with difficulty in his ethnic tongue. At the end of the war in 1975 he was sent to a re-education camp, but escaped four years later. *Straits Times (Singapore), 31 Oct 1998.*

HEAD CASES: Three illegal Romanian immigrants hammered nails into their heads to avoid being deported from Croatia, where they had been held in a Zagreb detention centre on 10 October. They dismantled a wash basin to get to a metal pipe, then removed three 2.5in (6cm) nails from a floorboard. One of the men suffered serious injuries. *Aberdeen Eve. Express, 14 Oct 1998.*

ASKING FOR IT: On 21 August, Josh Rempel was struck by lightning while standing beside a tree in a park. It left a hole in his baseball cap and singed his hair; he spent the afternoon in hospital while his heart was monitored. The day before, the 16-year-old from Calgary in Canada discussed religion with his mother, ending the conversation by saying: "May God strike me down with lightning" to express his atheism. "I believe in a higher being now," he said afterwards. "I was spared." *Victoria (BC) Times-Colonist, 22 Aug 1998.*

sidelines

GETTING A LEG UP: Tom Whittaker, 49, who has an artificial leg, reached the summit of Mount Everest on 26 May with a colleague who had conquered the peak seven days earlier. Whittaker, an outdoor pursuits instructor from Portmadoc in Wales now living in Arizona, lost his right kneecap and foot in a car accident in 1979. *Times (of Malta), D.Telegraph, 28 May 1998.*

BRING THE HOUSE DOWN: About 1,300 worshippers were in the evangelical Church of the Universal Kingdom of God in Osasco, São Paulo, when the roof crashed down on 5 September, killing 26 and injuring 500. The collapse was caused by termites, mould and water damage that weakened wooden ceiling supports. *[R] 13 Nov 1998.*

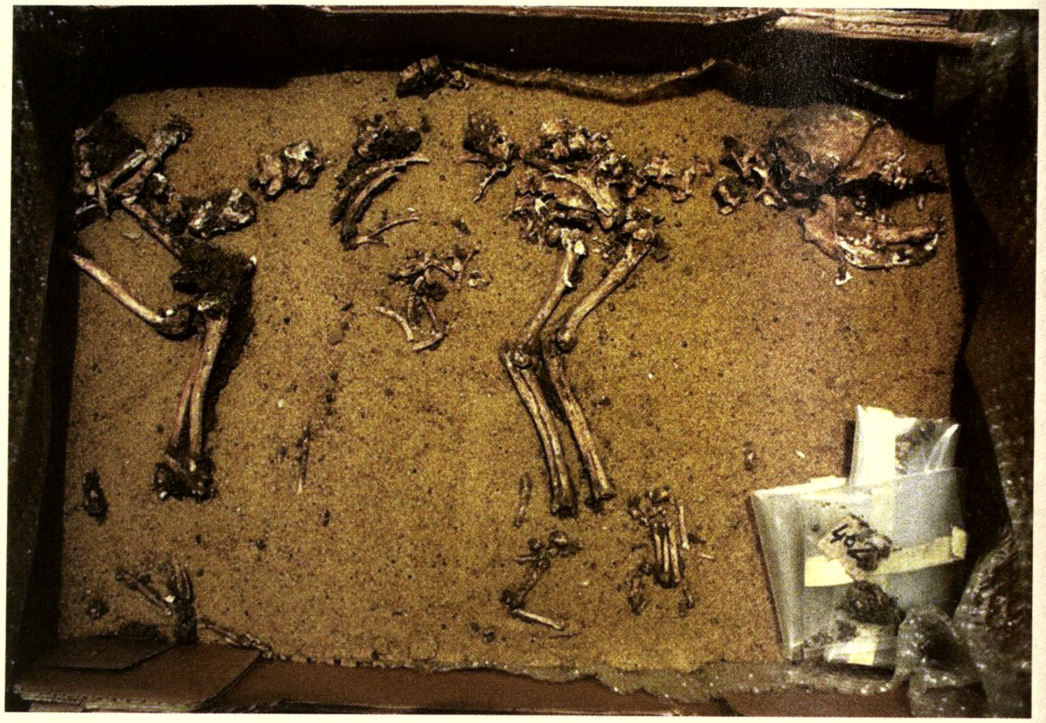
CAT-ASTROPHE: A leopard sneaked into a house in Chandigarh, northern India, climbed onto a bed and watched television before dozing off. The owner of the house thought her four-year-old son was referring to a wildlife documentary when he said there was a "tiger" in the room. When she realised the truth, she grabbed her son and fled. Forest department officials shot the leopard with a tranquilliser dart and carried it to a zoo. *[R] 30 Oct 1998.*

ONE THAT GOT AWAY: A 67lb (30kg) mirror carp, the biggest in Britain, was found dead at Roundhay Park Tropical World, Leeds, after evading anglers for 28 years.*Sunday Telegraph, 8 Nov 1998.*

THE LADY VANISHES: Two women, who work for the city council at St Nicholas House, Aberdeen, Scotland, saw a dark-haired woman enter a lift – but she had vanished seconds later when the lift opened. "We were both very spooked by it and were holding on to each other," said one. "I had never seen the other woman before. I asked if she had seen the woman go into the lift and she said yes." *Aberdeen Eve. Express, 11 July 1998.*

MONEY TREE: Last November, hundreds of people came from all over Salak South, near Sungai Besi in Malaysia, to collect water pouring miraculously from a 40ft (12m) Pokok Sena tree, believing that the water was lucky and had healing powers. A long-time resident, K S Tham, 38, said that a friend washed his car with the water and the car number appeared as a winning lottery number the next day. *Singapore Star, 12 Nov 1998.*

WET DREAM: James Currens, 77, sleepwalked behind his home in Palm Harbor, Florida, and woke up in several feet of water with his legs stuck in mud. Several alligators, some more than 3ft (1m) long, approached and he poked at them with his cane to try and keep them away. A neighbour heard him yelling and called the police, who used lights to scare off the alligators and freed Mr Currens, who suffered only minor injuries. *[AP] 26 Nov 1998.*



BOTH IMAGES NEWS INTERNATIONAL

house dogged by spectre

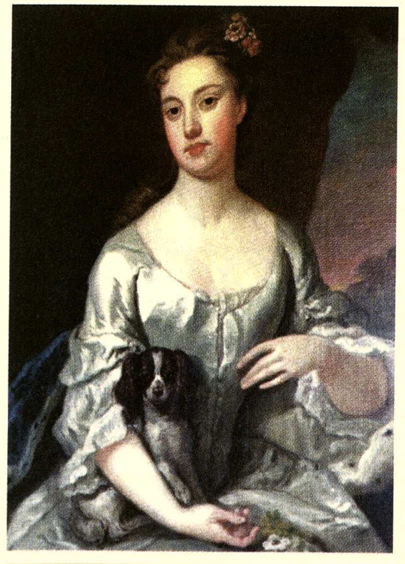
IN 1770, HORACE Walpole recorded that Ham House in Richmond, southwest London, played host to several ghosts, including those of a spaniel and the first Countess and Duchess of Lauderdale. Jan Graffius, who has managed the Jacobean Thameside property for the National Trust for the last four years, says the ghostly dog is seen about twice a year. Many people who see the dog complain to staff that pets should not be allowed inside. The animal is described as resembling a small King Charles spaniel of the kind that appears cradled in the arms of Grace Carteret – the fourth Countess of Dysart – in a painting in the house by the court artist Kneller, dating from about 1710.

Researchers working for the National Trust have discovered the carefully laid out remains of a small dog during excavations of the orangery. "The orangery was the showpiece," said Mrs Graffius, "and here he was found neatly laid out in a trench relating to the 17th century in front of what we believe was once an ornamental fountain. So quite a prestigious place to put a dog. It was clearly no mutt." Studies of the bones, which were placed in a sand box, have been made. "There are difficulties because of changes in breeding over the past three centuries," she said. "But we are advised that they could be of a spaniel-like dog. Certainly they date from the right period to be a Cavalier King Charles spaniel."

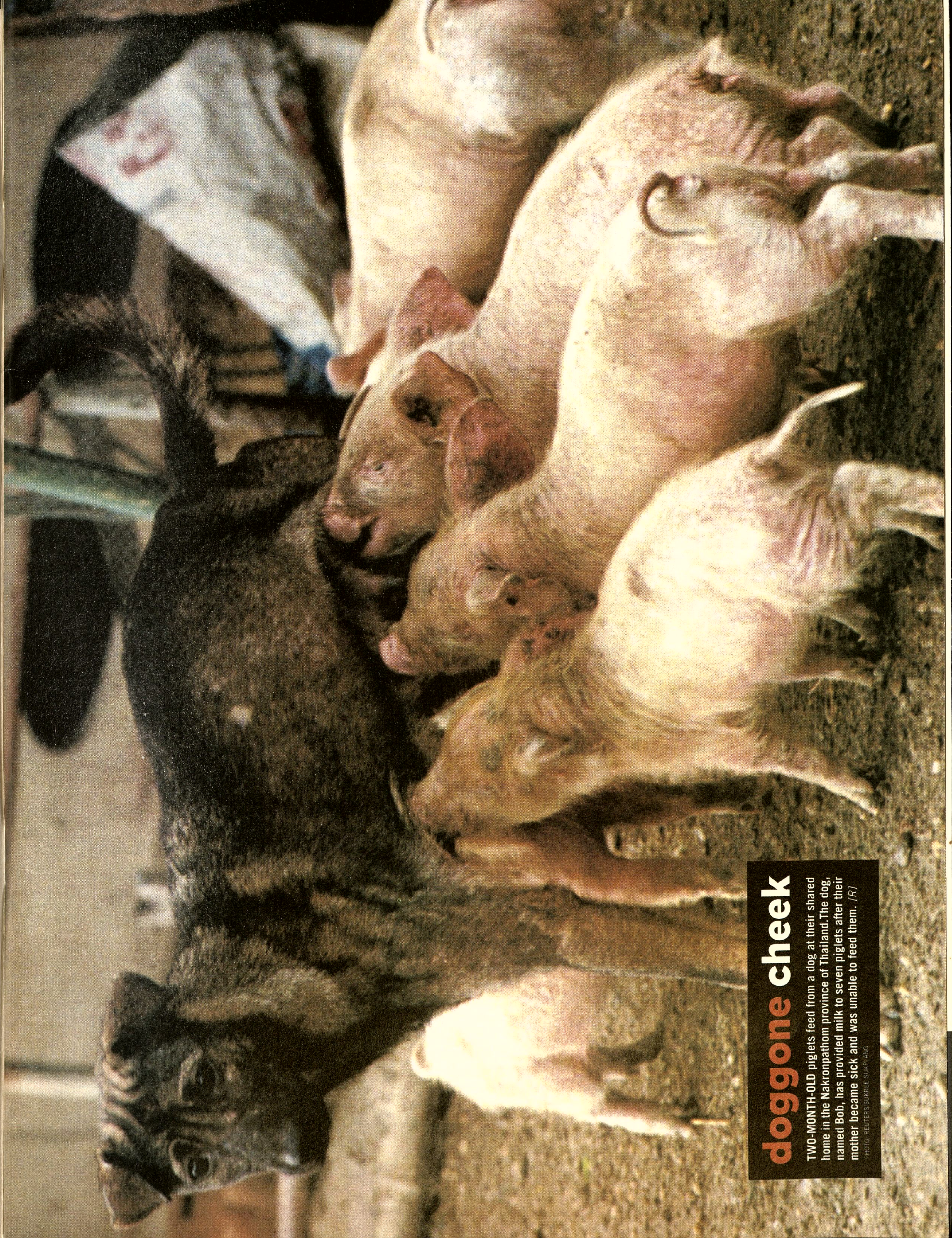
Mrs Graffius believes the dog could have been owned by the notorious first Countess and Duchess of Lauderdale – grandmother of the fourth Countess – who would have "had a troupe of dogs. They were the fashion accessory of the day." This woman, who inherited the house from her father in 1655, is fabled to be the ghostly hand behind slamming doors and the sound of furniture being dragged across a bedroom floor, as well as sightings of a ghost in widow's weeds. Other images of the dog are to be found in paintings on the walls of the round gallery and near the main staircase, where the ghostly spaniel is said to scamper.

Another painting of the countess, with her children, shows a similar dog, as does a painting by Titian on the stairs. "Strangely enough, the Titian is on the bend in the stairs where the dog most frequently appears," said Mrs Graffius. "It has also been seen outside on the terrace. There was even one lady who complained to us about a small, brown-and-white dog, that jumped up at her and then disappeared."

Of all the ghostly phenomena in Ham House, Mrs Graffius finds the smoking ghost the most bizarre. "You can enter the marble dining room and there is this smell of pungent sweet tobacco smoke. You cannot smoke in the house and there are smoke detectors everywhere. Yet they never go off." She believes the smoking ghost is the first Duke of Lauderdale, who became hooked on tobacco imported from Virginia. *Times, 26 Feb; Richmond Guardian, 5 Mar; Richmond & Twickenham informer, 6 Mar 1998.*



PORTRAIT OF A LADY: Grace Carteret, the fourth Countess of Dysart, cradles a spaniel in this painting by Kneller.



doggone cheek

TWO-MONTH-OLD piglets feed from a dog at their shared home in the Nakronpathom province of Thailand.The dog, named Bob, has provided milk to seven piglets after their mother became sick and was unable to feed them. *[R]*

PHOTO: REUTERS/SUKREE SUKPLANG

“I got 95% in a University essay – thanks to PhotoReading!”

A remarkable new technique is revolutionising studying. It enables anyone to mentally photograph the printed page at the rate of one page a second – *writes Chris Payne.*

Says Peter Barka: “I got 95% for an essay on Freud and 88% for one on Piaget – and it's all down to the PhotoReading home study course. All I did was PhotoRead the relevant chapters at the rate of one page a second – about 25,000 words per minute.”

“I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT,” said Peter Barka, who lives in Surbiton. “I opened up the envelope containing my marks for two Open University essays I wrote, and got a real shock. My tutor had awarded me 95% for an essay on Freud and 88% for one on Piaget – and it's all down to the PhotoReading home study course.

“What amazed me was that I was only expecting 65-70%, which I usually get for my essays. I hadn't done any background reading – I didn't get round to it in time – or the expected 15 hours a week study time!

“Yet my tutor wrote in his report: ‘In the Freud essay you analysed the relevant concepts with unusual depth and insight. Clearly a pass 1 (95%). A similar standard is maintained in the short notes questions. You have evidently gained a great deal of knowledge which will be of use throughout the course.’

“I was shocked at the result”

“All I did was PhotoRead the relevant chapters on Freud and Piaget at the rate of one page a second – about 25,000 words per minute. Then, when I Rapid Read the chapters, I noticed that the text seemed to have a tinge of familiarity to it. I also PhotoRead some essay/thesis-writing guides.

“When I sat down and wrote the essay I felt I knew something about the subject. But after I wrote the essay I thought ‘Oh my god, I'll probably do worse than last time when I got 73%’, especially as I'm very left brain, and the subject matter was more right brained. How wrong I was!”

Peter was overjoyed on the day he got, for him, the unusually high marks: “I felt delirious, and I danced around like an idiot. I was just shocked at the result. I still feel quite shaky when I talk to my friends about the possibilities of PhotoReading.”

“I'm absolutely bowled over!”

Hilke Legenhausen, 27, and based in East Grinstead, earns her living as a translator. She spent a couple of weeks learning to PhotoRead, and then PhotoRead her German-English dictionary twice.

“The dictionary has 1,600 pages, so I Photo-Read the whole of it in about half an hour. I got my personal proof that the system works when I translated a German magazine into English: I only had to look up four expressions when 40 or 50 would be normal for me. I'm absolutely bowled over!

“I'm about to start PhotoReading all my textbooks for the next year, and guess what: anatomy and physiology don't scare me anymore!”

Ms Hilke Legenhausen: PhotoRead a German-English dictionary and “got personal proof that the system works”

“I almost felt a cheat”

Vee Freir, who lives in the Highlands of Scotland, recently completed an Open University BSc Honours degree.

In the last OU year she had to read 22 course units, plus set books and other reference material, and submit seven written assessments (TMAs) which included project work.

She enthuses: “As a result of using the PhotoReading techniques I got so far ahead that I completed the reading and the written assessments a couple of months early. The tutor was a bit taken aback as he'd never experienced this before and, what's more, my assessments averaged 87%.

“For one essay I went in the library and PhotoRead 16 books with the purpose of getting one relevant quote from each. Within half an hour of PhotoReading I had done just that, and I was amazed how quickly it happened.

“I almost felt a cheat, yet I went through every page of each book, and must have subconsciously absorbed the relevant parts to have accessed the information that quickly.”

“A strange experience” says McKenna

TV hypnotist Paul McKenna learned to PhotoRead for a Channel 4 documentary. He commented: “When PhotoReading does work it's a strange experience. I ended up feeling a bit light-headed. I couldn't actually remember anything about the book – until the questions started. I just seemed to know some of the answers. I scored 73% which was statistically well in excess of anything I could have got just by guessing.”

“PhotoReading is literally eye-opening”

Sheila Ostrander, co-author of the best-selling book SuperLearning 2000, is very enthusiastic about PhotoReading: “It's literally eye-opening. In a sense PhotoReading is a specialised case of SuperLearning. The same core techniques are evoked – being in the right state of body and mind, feeding data to and accessing it from the unconscious, dissolving learning blocks – but applied to reading instead of, say, language learning.

“PhotoRead 100s of pages in minutes”

“Once you're connected to your brilliant second self, your unconscious, you can PhotoRead hundreds of pages in a very short time – just a few minutes – then be able to zero in on the key nuggets. This belief echoes the time-expansion work of Erikson, Rakov, and Houston and Masters, where people are prompted to get out of their own way and let their unconscious do the work in a fraction of the usual time.”

Ostrander carries on: “Speed reading has been around and working for over half a century, yet it's still rarely used in business or education. PhotoReading is a much more organic system, which flows with the nature of our expanding view of ourselves. It may well be standard equipment for 21st century Superlearners.”

From students to book authors to TV personalities, PhotoReading's dramatic results are creating a quiet revolution among time-conscious learners countrywide.

Ring TODAY on 01625 502602 for your FREE information pack.

You'll discover the five steps to the PhotoReading system. You'll also get a FREE copy of Book Blaster, the PhotoReading Newsletter. It's packed with inspiring stories and leading edge ideas you can use straight away!

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UNITED TELEVISION ENWS

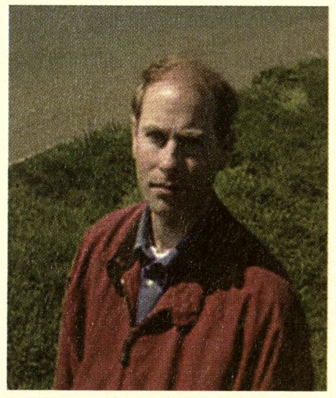
I SEE NO SHIPS: Did the *Crown and Country* shoot really capture footage of the ghostly frigate HMS Eurydice during filming?

sail of the (last) century

While filming his *Crown and Country* TV series on the Isle of Wight last May, Prince Edward recalled the sinking of *HMS Eurydice*, a 26-gun frigate, in Sandown Bay during a blizzard in 1878. Only two of the 300 crew survived and it is said that ever since there have been repeated sightings of a three-masted schooner at the point where it sank.

In 1930, a submarine captain ordered his crew to take evasive action to avoid a three-masted ship, which vanished as they watched. More recently, retired schoolmaster Robin Ford from Ventnor spotted it during a beach barbecue with friends. “It moved slowly towards the shore,” he said, “then just seemed to up-end and slipped silently out of view.” Another three-master was seen by magistrate Julie Matthews, who one summer night in 1978 also happened to be having a barbecue on the beach. “It came so close that if it had been real it would have run aground,” she said.

As if on cue, while Prince Edward's description of the tragedy was being filmed, someone noticed a three-masted schooner out to sea. “It was not arranged for us,” insisted the Prince. “It just appeared.” The programme's director, Robin Bextor, said: “We filmed it for a while, then decided to wait so we would catch it sailing off into the horizon. We assumed it was a training vessel. Like the rest of us, Edward was pleased at our stroke of luck at seeing it, because it saved us time and money getting footage of something similar. We were packing up our cameras and took our eyes off it for a few minutes, but when we went to film it again, it had gone.”



UNITED TELEVISION ENWS

ED CASE: Royal ghost-spotter Edward.

Sailing ship enthusiasts all stated they knew of no vessel in the area at the time of the marine apparition. “We have two training ships that sound like that, but on that particular week they were both away,” said Hilary Painter of the Sail Training Association at Portsmouth. Becky Lacey of the Jubilee Sailing Trust at Southampton said: “We have a three-masted square rigger called the *Lord Nelson*, but she was in Newcastle that week.” Barbara Hoyle of the Sea Cadet Corps at Gosport added: “We have the *Royalist*, which is a two-masted square rig brig, but she was not at sea that week.”

Prince Edward's great grandfather, the Duke of York (later George V), had a similar experience as a 16-year-old naval cadet on *HMS Inconstant* off the Australian coast. On 11 July 1881, he wrote in his log book: “At 4am the *Flying Dutchman* crossed our bows. A strange red light as of a phantom ship all aglow… Thirteen persons altogether saw her, but whether it was van Diemen of the *Flying Dutchman* or what else must remain unknown. The *Tourmaline* and *Cleopatra*… flashed to ask whether we had seen the strange red light.”

At 10.45am, the seaman who first sighted the spectral ship fell to his death. The king expanded on his sighting in a later account: “In the midst of the red light, the masts, spars and sails of a brig two hundred yards distant stood out in strong relief as she came up on the port bow… but on arriving there was no vestige or sign of a material ship. The night was clear and the sea calm.” *Mirror, D.Record, 17 Oct 1998; “Invisible Horizons” by Vincent Gaddis, 1965.*

sidelines

JUST IN TIME: On 19 October, the Kenyan government formed a committee to investigate potential problems caused by the millennium bug, ordering a final report in 18 months' time – four months after the bug will have taken effect. *[R] 3 Nov 1998.*

FIRESTARTER: A Singapore court sentenced Kee Keng Seng, 65, to seven and a half years in jail for setting fire to 56 cars, including nine BMWs. He was caught on 22 September setting fire to his 21st Mercedes-Benz. Kee said he was possessed and had heard voices telling him to do it. *[R] 30 Oct 1998.*

TEED OFF: A golfer's tee shot on the greens of the Marriott Tudor Park Hotel and Country Club near Maidstone in September 1997 brought down a rare Greater Vassa parrot which had escaped from owner Roy Lupton over a mile away 24 hours earlier. The £500 bird, called Jasper, was stunned but otherwise unhurt, and the freak encounter with a golf ball probably saved its life: Mr Lupton feared it would not have survived another night in the open. *Eve. Standard, 3 Sept 1997.*

MAKE MY DAY: The body of a man was found decapitated by a train in a tube tunnel near Leytonstone station, London, in late October. The only distinguishing mark was a vertical scar on his abdomen. He was wearing a black T-shirt with white lettering saying “Have A Very Bad Day”. There were no clues to his identity. *Leyton Guardian, 5 Nov 1998.*

WAR CRY: American missiles could be fired accidentally because they operate on the same frequency as baby monitors. Senior Pentagon officials say the Patriot missiles cannot be deployed in some trouble spots because of fears they could be launched by mistake or sent off-target by such signals. Other weapons have been switched off because mobile phones interfere with them. *D.Mail, 20 Oct 1998.*

CAN'T BUY ME LOVE: A mystery woman walked through the Merseyside estate in Blackpool last August giving away thousands of US dollars. She thrust $440 into 10-year-old Andrew Walsh's hands and pushed cash through letter boxes and open windows. She said she had won £3.1 million on the Lottery and wanted to give it away because no-one loved her. *Sunday People, 30 Aug 1998.*

SOFT CELL: Last July, members of the Scottish Association for Marine Science in Oban, working a kilometre beneath the surface of the North Atlantic near Rockall, recovered what they believe to be the largest single-celled organism ever seen. The sponge-like protozoan, a xenophyophore of the species *Syringammina fragilissima*, is 4in (10cm) in diameter. As its name indicates, it is extremely delicate and disintegrates if vibrated. *New Scientist, 24 Oct 1998.*

WIRED FOR WEIRD

This month **Jeff Koyen** guides the skiff across the river of online oddities

UFO SEEK

If it's not already, the Paranormal and UFO Search Engine should be at the top of your bookmarks list. This well-structured and savvy search engine also offers portal features such as news and updates on paranormal stories.

http://www.ufoseek.com/

FUTURE FATE

Keeping on eye on cataclysmic earth changes so you don't have to. More than just the usual round-up of Nostradamian doom 'n' gloom, this site offers a handy compilation of end times snippets, plus a somewhat promising chat room and infant message board.

http://www.futurefate.com

FERAL HOUSE

Simply put, Feral House is one of the best publishers currently in existence. Most widely renowned for the indispensible *Apocalypse Culture* and *Cult Rapture*, they've also published keepers such as Donna Kossy's *Kooks* compilation, *Secret and Suppressed*, *Virtual Government* and *Killer Fiction*. An order form is available for e-commerce enthusiasts.

http://www.feralhouse.com/

INTERNATIONAL UFO MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTER

Founded in 1991 by three "participants in the Roswell Incident of 1947", the museum (oh, yeah, and "research center") has, especially in recent years, become a must-see for area visitors. If you won't be cruising to New Mexico anytime soon, visit their website instead. And be sure to visit the gift shop!

http://www.iufomrc.com/

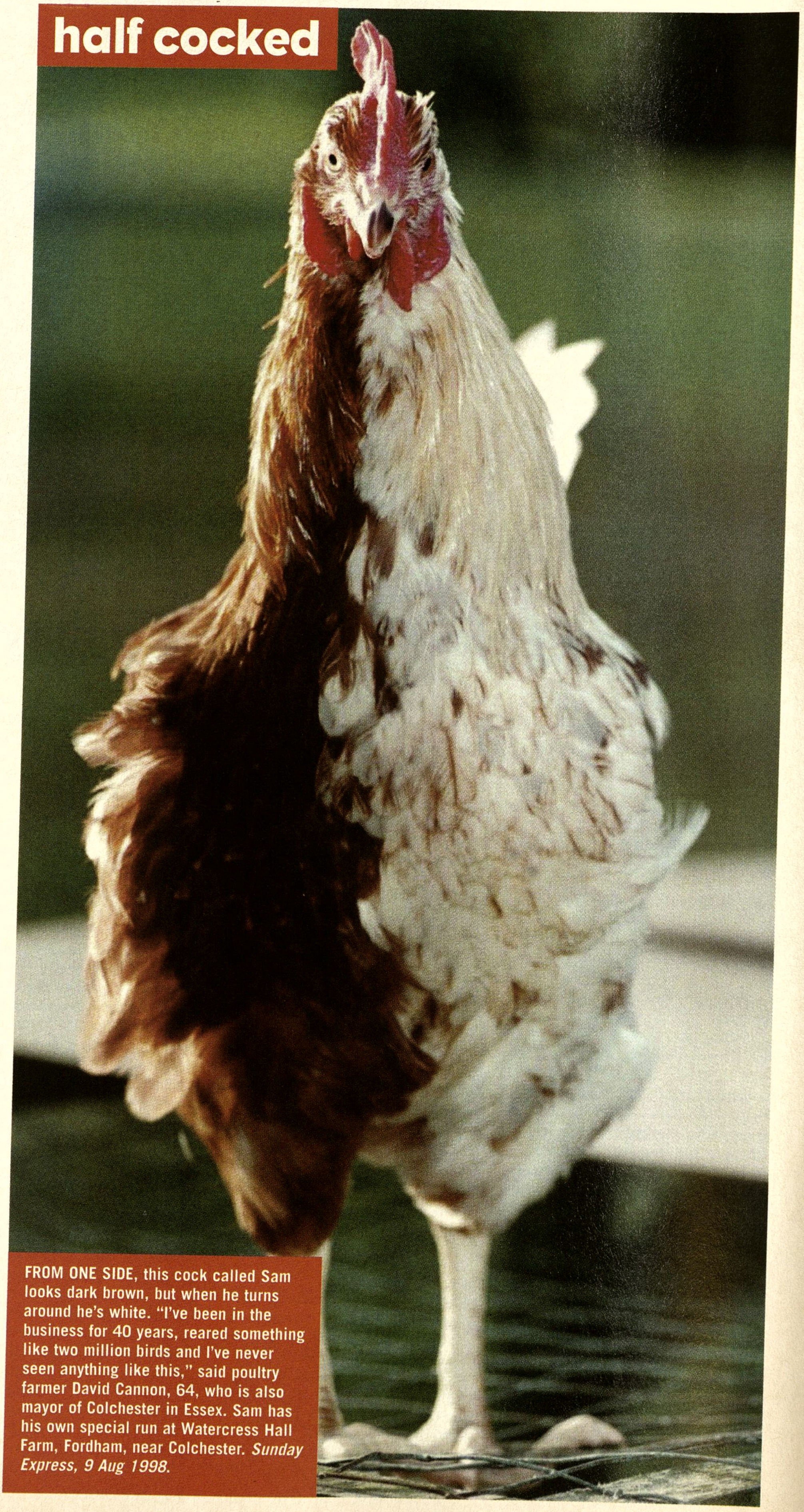
THE BLACK DAHLIA

On 15 January 1947, in a vacant lot outside Hollywood, Elizabeth Short's corpse was found in two bloodless pieces. Remembered as the Black Dahlia murder, this unsolved case has captivated our dark imaginations for some 50 years. Not just for murder junkies, this fact-based website does a fine job of conveying the mystery and intrigue of this infamous, unavenged death.

http://www.bethshort.com

Jeff Koyen lives and works in New York City, which has certainly earned its right to be groundzero for the apocalypse.

half cocked



EXPRESS SYNDICATION/PETER DAVIES/MCLELLAN

FROM ONE SIDE, this cock called Sam looks dark brown, but when he turns around he's white. "I've been in the business for 40 years, reared something like two million birds and I've never seen anything like this," said poultry farmer David Cannon, 64, who is also mayor of Colchester in Essex. Sam has his own special run at Watercress Hall Farm, Fordham, near Colchester. *Sunday Express, 9 Aug 1998.*

MAX SCHRECK AS NOSFERATU COURTESY OF CORBIS

was Dracula rabid?

NEUROLOGIST JUAN GOMEZ-ALONSO of the Xeral Hospital in Vigo, Spain, has suggested a link between vampires and rabies. His thesis appeared in the 21 September edition of the journal *Neurology*. Watching an old vampire film, he was struck by the "obvious similarities between vampires and what happened in rabies, such as aggressiveness and hypersexuality".

Dr Gomez-Alonso found that 25 per cent of rabid men have a tendency to bite others, often passing on the rabies in saliva, just as vampires allegedly increase the population of the un-dead by biting the living. He maintained that early tales of vampirism frequently coincided with reports of rabies outbreaks in eastern Europe, such as the widespread epidemic of rabies in dogs, wolves and other animals in Hungary in 1721-28, approximately the place and time when vampire legends first became common.Stories of blood-drinking undead occur round the world and probably date back many centuries, but in eastern Europe the frightening symptoms of rabies could well have been incorporated into existing folklore.

The first symptoms of rabies, which include loss of appetite, fever and fatigue, can be confused with those of flu; but the virus soon begins to attack the central nervous system and in the final stages before death it can cause agitation and dementia. In severe cases, called furious rabies, the victim can become violent and animal-like.

Vampires generally are male, and rabies is seven times more frequent in men than in women. Rabid men develop insomnia, tend to wander at night and become hypersexual, sometimes getting painful erections that last for days. "The literature reports cases of rabid patients who practised intercourse up to 30 times in a day," says Gomez-Alonso.

The legend of vampires transforming themselves into animals may come from the way rabies affects bats, dogs and wolves in a fashion similar to man. In particular, muscle spasms in the face and neck can give human victims the look of an angry dog. Vampires' aversion to garlic and mirrors could be ascribed to rabid hypersensitivity. "Men with rabies," he said, "react to stimuli such as water, light, odours or mirrors with spasms of the facial and vocal muscles that can cause hoarse sounds, bared teeth and frothing at the mouth of bloody fluid." In the past, he contended, "a man was not considered rabid if he was able to stand the sight of his own image in a mirror." *[UPI,R] 21 Sept; New Scientist, 26 Sept 1998. For alternative views of vampirism, see FT47:12, 80:46-47.*

EXTRA EXTRA

LESBIAN EX-NUN WITCH HITS BAD SPELL IN N.Y.
New York Post, 19 May 1997.

TOAD STUCK IN SHARE HOLE DESPITE HIGH-PROFILE SIGNING
D.Telegraph, 6 Sept 1997.

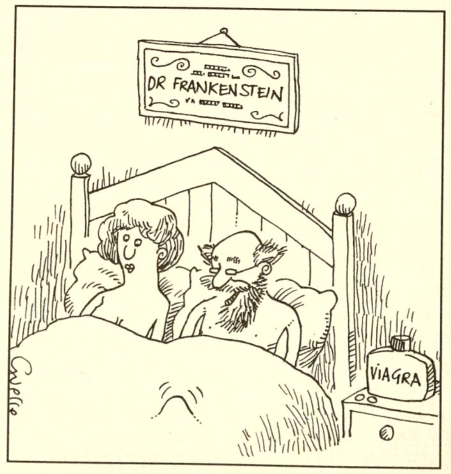
EXPERTS BURY BRITISH COAL
Guardian, 17 Sept 1997.

SYSTEM FAILS TO CATCH HERMAPHRODITE CATTLE
Irish Times, 1 Oct 1997.

BLIND MAN BITES GUIDE DOG IN DRUNKEN RAGE
D.Telegraph, 2 Oct 1997.

POSTMEN TAUGHT HOW TO WALK
D.Mail, 11 Oct 1997.

FAMILY ISSUES ULTIMATUM OVER CRATER
Yorkshire Regional Ceefax, 11 Oct 1997.



GUERRE

"IT'S ALIVE! IT'S ALIVE!"

MOTHER MARY COMES TO ME...

As regular *FT* readers will know, as we approach the millennium sightings of the Virgin Mary have become more frequent – and often bizarre. Here Paul Sieveking presents two very different cases from America.

POPPERFOTO

LIKE A VIRGIN: Nancy Fowler delivers the last of the Virgin Mary's many messages to her to a crowd of 30,000.

MORE THAN 100,000 pilgrims converged on a hilltop farm in Conyers, Georgia, 35 miles (56 km) east of Atlanta, on 13 October to clutch rosaries, sing and scan the skies for heavenly signs while listening to what they believed was a final message from the Virgin Mary.

Former nurse Nancy Fowler has relayed messages she says are from the Virgin Mary over the past seven years. The annual event, which is not sanctioned by the local Roman Catholic hierarchy, drew 30,000 believers last year. Fowler, 47, claimed to have received hundreds of private messages from the Virgin Mary and Jesus since 1983. "I understand from Our Lady that next year will be the last of her public messages," Fowler told pilgrims last year. She did not explain why.

Caravans of buses from across the United States and Latin America rolled into Georgia for the final message. Others came from as far away as Australia and Japan.

Fowler spoke for 30 minutes from written notes in a halting voice sent through loudspeakers and translated into Spanish.

When relaying the Virgin's message, she slipped into what some doctors have described as a state near coma. Neurophysiologist Ricardo Castanon, from La Paz, Bolivia, was one of a scientific team that studied Fowler's encounters. He found her brain produced delta waves similar to those experienced in deep sleep whenever she claimed to have seen an apparition of Jesus or Mary. Her heart rate dropped to minimal levels.

The message this time was to "pray against the evils of this day" and shun materialism; also that young people should model their lives on those of the saints and that she would like to see a church built on Fowler's farm. "Today my Lady has come for the last time in this way. We will not be able to see Our Lady again in this way until we are in heaven," Fowler told the crowd after conveying the message.

As Fowler spoke, Paul Ault of Dayton, Ohio, displayed two Polaroid photographs he said were taken while the Virgin Mary was speaking with Fowler. The photographs both showed the blue sky with billowing clouds. To one side in one was a vertical cloud shaped like a Madonna image wearing a white robe and a long grey mantle. "I've never seen anything like this. I took both of these shots and look, you can see her in one and you can't in the other," he said.

Many of the faithful on Fowler's farm took repeated photographs of the Sun as she relayed what she said were Mary's words. Believers say the sun changes colour while the two communicate. Others waited for stones to turn to gold. As is customary in BVM events, some picked up the scent of roses.

Many Catholic leaders in the region have distanced themselves from Fowler's claims. Archbishop James Lyke wrote to priests saying he doubted the authenticity of Fowler's apparitions and urging them to discourage visits to the farm.

Rockdale County authorities have also expressed concern about the influx of visitors in the largely rural county with a population of just 60,000.

In 1991 the county health department asked Fowler to post signs warning pilgrims about water from a well on her property. The well, which Fowler said Jesus blessed in an appearance to her, tested positive for coliform bacteria.

In 1992 the county asked Fowler to help regulate the flow of vehicles entering and leaving the farm after a traffic jam prevented emergency workers from reaching an elderly woman with heart problems.

In 1993, *The Atlanta Constitution* reported, the county threatened to declare large crowds at the farm a public nuisance. The complaint failed to deter the public, however, and in November of that year 80,000 people showed up, the largest gathering so far.

Fowler said that year that her monthly messages would stop and she would speak only once a year, on 13 October, the anniversary of a reported appearance by the Virgin Mary to three children in Fatima, Portugal, in 1917. Pope John Paul II has recognised the Fatima appearance as a factual event.

Fowler, who moved to Florida in November, transferred the title of the farm to a non-profit group called "Our Loving Mother's Children Inc." Trees on the farm held racks of contribution envelopes, and an address to which believers could send accounts of miracles associated with Fowler's visions to the Catholic church.

On Monday, Fowler, who generally shuns interviews, surprised the faithful by appearing on her front porch and taking questions. When one pilgrim asked what Jesus looked like, she said she did not know. "I can't tell you that it was a visual thing," she said. "But... my heart was filled with love." *[R,AP] NY Daily News, 13 Oct; Guardian, D.Mail, 14 Oct 1998.*

WORD THAT AN image of the Virgin Mary had appeared on a supermarket freezer door lured pilgrims to a small store in New Jersey last May.

The image, said to be a silhouette of a woman in a hooded garment and identified by the faithful as Our Lady of Guadalupe (the patron saint of Mexico), first appeared on 14 May inside the thick, double-paned glass door of a freezer containing sausages, burritos and plantains at La Conga Supermarket in Jersey City, a largely Hispanic and heavily Catholic working-class city a few miles west of New York.

Although the image had faded away by 18 May, people kept arriving at the store. Hundreds of visitors left candles, handwritten messages and flowers.

Asked about the image, Michael Hurley, a spokesman for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese in Newark, New Jersey, said: "It is not impossible that some condensation got inside those two thermal panes and caused the image. I am led to believe that it is certainly not an apparition, but could I swear that it wasn't? No."

After an apparent image of Christ appeared on the side of a freezer in Estill Springs, Tennessee, in May 1987, a cleric made one of *FT*'s favourite remarks: "When the good Lord comes, he won't come on a major appliance" [***FT49:34***]. *Newark (NJ) Star Ledger, 16 May; [R] 18 May 1998.*

The FACE ON MARS:

A Stunning NEW VIDEO
Presented by David S Percy ARPS

The AVEBURY CONNECTION

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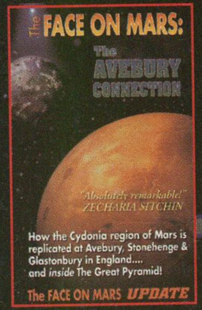
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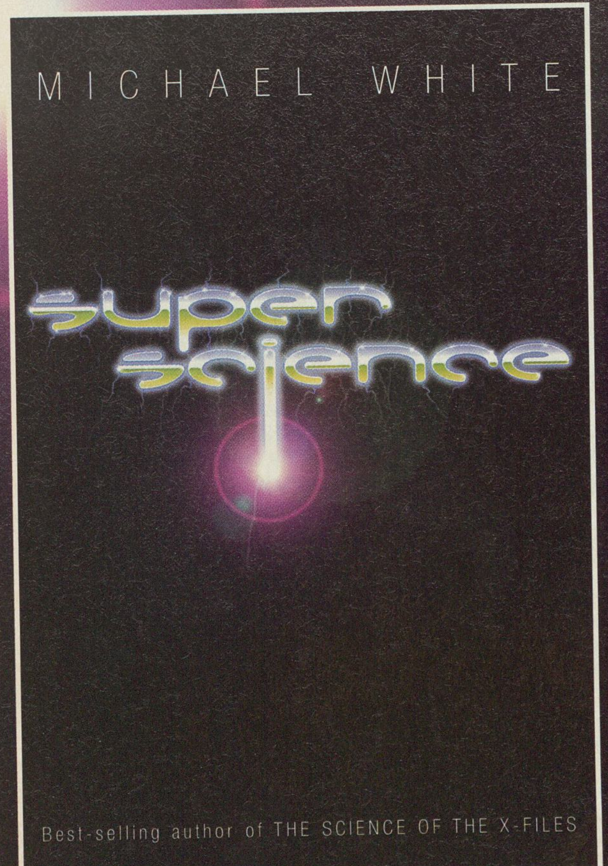

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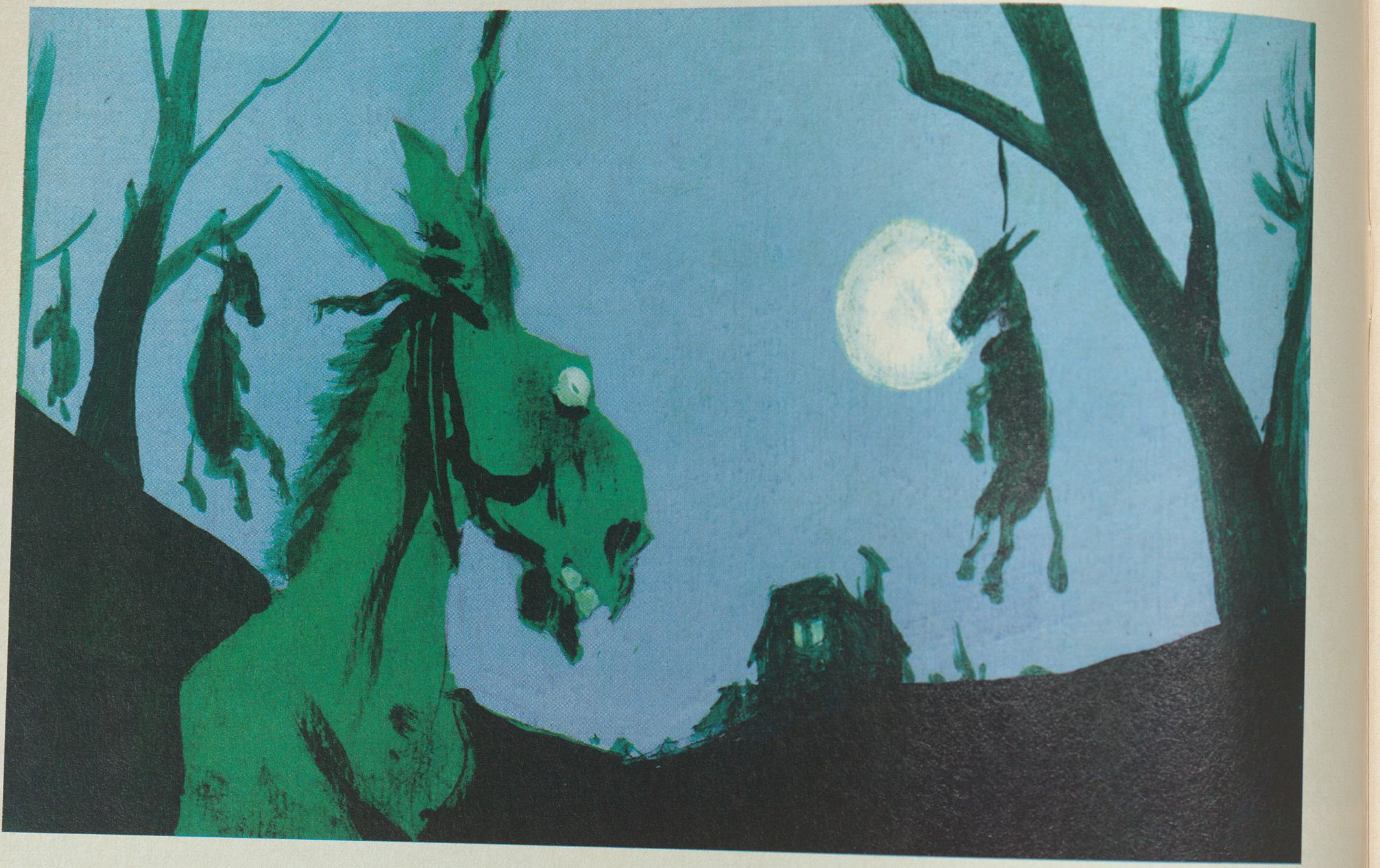


FABRICE TARRIN

dropping the dead donkey

ON 1 OCTOBER, Solomon "Mr Mulelo" Singo of Bally Farm, Mulelo, appeared in the Mutale Magistrate's Court, accused of hanging 43 donkeys from trees and a fence around his house in August, apparently because the animals regularly wandered onto his property. The animals had been hanged with wire and some were decapitated. Judging from the number of donkey skulls lying about the farm – near Messina in Northern Province, South Africa – it appeared that more than 43 donkeys had been killed. The animals had been essential to their owners, subsistence farmers who used them to plough fields and fetch water. *Johannesburg Star, 16+28 Sept; 1 Oct 1998.*

ALMOST 70 PRIME breeding cattle died at a remote Australian property in Amamoor, Queensland, this year – the first 37 in March, followed in July by 31 brahford-cross cows and a carolais bull. The $21,000 breeding herd of 70 to 80 head owned by two local graziers had been all but wiped out. Police ruled out a drug connection and were trying to uncover some vendetta. "We don't think it was a thrill kill because the only way you could get to [the cattle] was on horseback or foot," said Det-Sgt Vic Tipman of the Gympie police.

When the carcasses of the first cattle were noticed on 4 April, about three weeks after their deaths, the owners thought they might have died from plant poisoning or disease. Gympie Department of Industries stock inspector John Crossley said the cattle were badly decomposed and there was no indication of foul play. The herd was inoculated before being moved to a different paddock on the mountainous 1500ha property.

When the second batch of dead cattle was discovered on 7 August, fresh wounds, seven to 10 days old, indicated that they had been shot with a large calibre weapon – at random, in their stomachs, necks and hindquarters. "It was pretty bizarre. I couldn't believe anyone would do that," said Mr Crossley. Only 14 cows and calves of the original herd had survived, some still suffering minor gunshot wounds. *Brisbane Courier Mail, 19 Aug 1998.*

EVERY YEAR, THOUSANDS of birds seemingly possessed of a nocturnal death wish, commit mass suicide in Jatinga village, Assam, north-east India. The thickly wooded area in the Cachar Hills bordering Burma is known as "death valley". On cold and overcast October nights, hordes of green pigeons, white-breasted kingfishers, emerald doves, hill partridges, yellow Malaya bitterns, racket-tailed drongos, purple moorhen, three-toed kingfishers and dozens of other rare species fly directly towards lanterns in the village, where they are clubbed to death by 2,000 members of the Jantiya tribe. Often tiring of the apparently endless stream of birds diving at the lanterns, the villagers light electric bulbs in buckets, trapping the birds to kill later.

Ornithologists and researchers have no explanation for this behaviour except that it recurs every autumn under certain atmospheric conditions: an overcast, moonless night with slight drizzle, heavy ground mist and with a south or north wind through the Jatinga valley at 20–25mph (32–40 km/h). Some researchers claim these conditions, combined with the magnetic pull over Jatinga, disorients the birds, who lose control and fly towards the miriad lights and certain death.

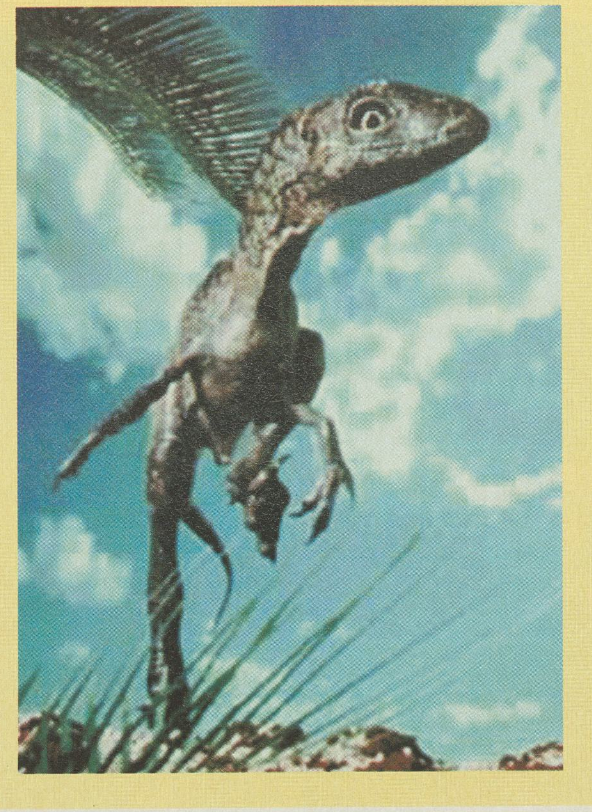
According to local legend, the Zemi Naga tribe, the original inhabitants of Jatinga, first noticed the phenomenon in 1895 when a bonfire was lit to scare away animals. Within minutes, hundreds of birds had flown into the fire. Elders blamed an evil spirit, but when the deaths continued the next night, the Nagas stopped lighting fires or lamps in the open. When one of the Nagas died mysteriously a few days later in his fields, the elders linked his demise to the birds and abandoned Jatinga, handing it over to a group of migrant Jantiyas. When the latter experienced the birds' suicide dive, they looked upon it as a gift of the gods. *Report by Rahul Bedi, South China Morning Post, 15 Oct; D.Telegraph, 23 Oct 1998.*

whale meet again

ON 17 OCTOBER, a large number of pilot whales beached themselves at Marion Bay on Tasmania's south-east coast. Rescuers returned 50 whales to deep water, but another stranding occurred on a beach to the north and a second group came ashore at Marion Bay. Grounded whales were freed from shallow water and moved back out to sea only to become beached at another section of the 12-mile (19km) stretch of coast. Rangers buried about 100 whales on 19 October.

Ten days later, conservation officials shot dead 42 stranded pilot whales as 288 perished at Doughboy Bay on the remote Stewart Island in southern New Zealand. "The surviving whales were so distressed it was better to put them out of their misery," Southland conservation official Lou Sanson said. "This is one of the largest mass strandings in the world" – and the second largest on record in New Zealand. "It's an entirely natural event that has been happening for thousands of years," Mr Sanson asserted. It is possible, however, that electromagnetic and sonic pollution in the oceans are increasing the number of whale beachings. *[AP] 20+30 Oct 1998.*

AP

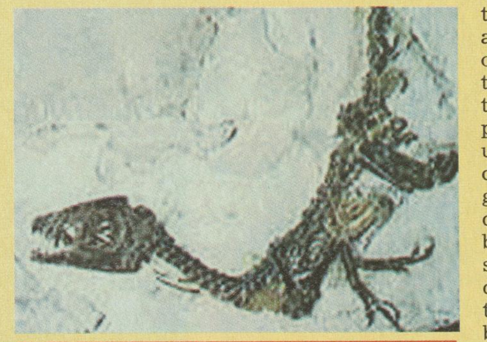


BOTH IMAGES http://palaeo.gly.bris.ac.uk/News/Scipio.html

insides story

THIS BABY DINOSAUR, 9in (23cm) long and 113 million years old, is the first dinosaur to be found in Italy and the only one in the world to show its internal organs. It is a distant relative of the Velociraptor and has been named *Scipionyx samniticus*. The name derives from the Latin *Scipio* and the Greek *onyx*, and is dedicated to Scipione Breislak, the geologist who first described the fossils from the region in 1798, and the celebrated Roman soldier, Publius Cornelius Scipio. *Samniticus* means "from Samnium", the Latin name of the Benevento province (in the Matese mountains north of Naples) where the fossil was found in 1993 in the village of Pietraroia.

Soft tissue, including muscle, gut, colon and traces of liver, can be clearly distinguished, and studies of the intestine and the trachea will provide an unprecedented glimpse of dinosaur biology and stoke up the debate about the origin of birds. The hatchling shows no evidence of feathers, but its intestine and skeleton are quite bird-like – it even has a wishbone. *Times, NY Times, D.Telegraph, Guardian, D.Mail, 26 Mar 1998.*

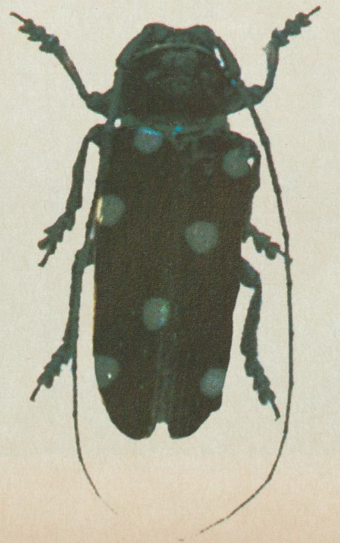


BONING UP: An artist's impression (left) of what the fossil (above) would have looked like when alive.

watch out... beetle's about

A COAL-BLACK beetle with white polka-dots gnawing its way through thousands of trees in Chicago – and found in warehouses in 12 other states – is threatening to spark a trade war between America and China. Five per cent of Chicago is already under quarantine. No tree trimmings or logs can be removed from the area, and doomed trees are being marked with fluorescent green dash. The victims will be destroyed this winter, when the adult beetles have died and the larvæ are dormant.

The inch- (2.5cm) long Asian long-horn beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) has been arriving in the wooden packaging and pallets of Chinese imports. It bores deep into hardwood trees, eventually killing them. It is extremely hard to trap, has no known predators and is invulnerable to pesticides. An earlier outbreak in New York led to about 2,000 trees being killed. The US Department of Agriculture told the Chinese that from mid-December they must treat all wood shipping materials on US imports with heat or chemicals – or face a ban which could affect up to half China's £48 billion-a-year exports to America, at a time when the Far Eastern economic slump is already hurting Chinese exports. *D.Telegraph, 9 Oct; Economist, 19 Oct 1998.*



DORLING KINDERSLEY

ALIEN ZOO

KARL SHUKER
with the latest from planet cryptozoology

WATCH THE BIRDIE!

One of the world's most mysterious birds, Rothschild's parakeet *Psittacula intermedia*, was known for many years from only seven specimens, of unknown provenance. Accordingly, some ornithologists speculated that this intangible species may in reality be a rare hybrid of two other parakeets. Since the early 1980s, however, a few additional specimens have appeared each year in the bird markets of India, raising hopes that it was a valid species after all, and that its secret homeland in the wild would eventually be found. Now, sure enough, Karthikeyan Vasudevan from the Wildlife Institute of India in Dehra Dun has announced that Rothschild's parakeet is one of 10 ostensibly lost or vanished vertebrate species that have been rediscovered during a major two-year zoological survey of India, just completed, searching its southern rainforests, its Himalayan foothills and its western desert scrub. Another notable 'extinct' species found alive and well by this survey is the toad-skinned frog *Indirana phymoderma. New Scientist, 26 Sept 1998.*

SNAKES ALIVE!

Nigel Dempster's famous celebrity-based gossip column in the *Daily Mail* recently included details of a very curious encounter made by explorer Lt Colonel John Blashford-Snell, in wildest Dorset. Walking through undergrowth near his home, Blashers was startled to see what he momentarily took to be a python, gliding through some grass nearby. On reflection, however, he decided that it was just an extremely large grass snake. But was it? Blashers estimated it to be 6ft (1.8m) long, and "grey with a pattern of black diamonds". Although some big grass snakes do occur, and can exhibit a range of colours, I have never read of a conclusively identified British grass snake matching Blashers's description. Perhaps, therefore, it was an adder of over-estimated length, or even an escapee specimen of some non-native serpent? *D. Mail, 24 July 1998.*

the people's goddess

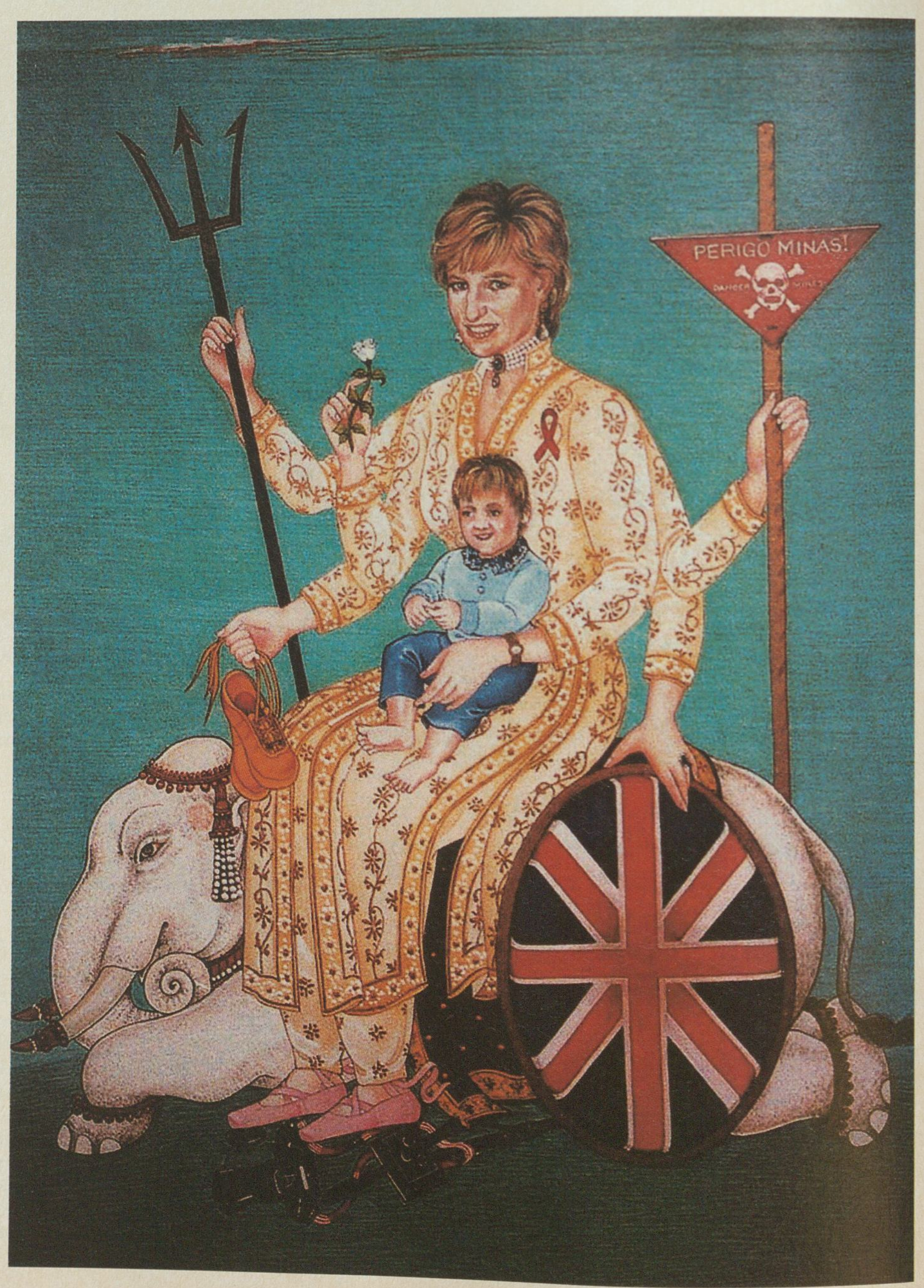
THIS DEPICTION OF Diana, Princess of Wales, (pictured below) as a Hindu goddess was painted in the Mogul miniature style by 32-year-old twins Rabindra and Amrit Kaur Singh, from the Wirral, Merseyside. They come from a Sikh background, but had a Roman Catholic upbringing.

The Princess wears a *salwaar kameez.* Pinned to her shoulder is a red AIDS ribbon while the baby in her lap is a symbol of motherhood – the mother image of the goddess Durga is one of the most potent in Hinduism. The shield and trident of Britannia have been retained, but the lion has been replaced by a white elephant. White is for compassion, while the elephant was the mode of transport for Mogul emperors.

In each of her six hands she holds a symbol relating to her personality or her work: one holds an anti-landmine placard. The camera and tripod under her feet represent the paparazzi. *D.Telegraph, 26 Aug 1998.*

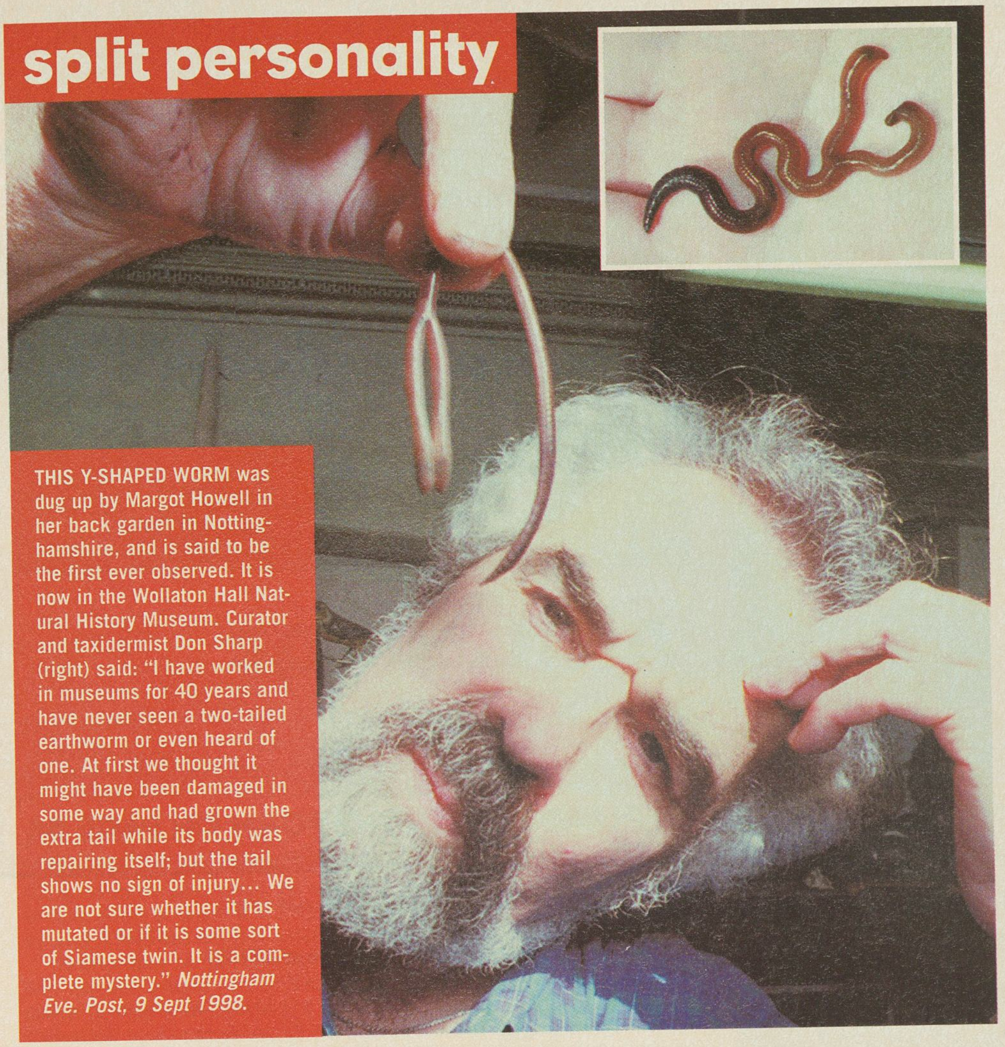
FORMER ALTHORPE HOUSEKEEPER Maudie Pendry has revealed that Oval Island, where Princess Diana has been buried, was used for years as a pet cemetery. Headstones marking the graves of five hunting dogs belonging to Diana's grandfather, Jack, were removed to make way for her memorial.

"I cannot believe Earl Spencer could be so heartless as to bury his sister in a dog burial ground," she said. "It is a desecration." On the contrary, the choice of site seems to be very apt. After all, the Goddess Diana was usually accompanied by her hounds. *Mirror, 6 July 1998.*


PERIGO MINAS!

TOM FINNIE & KEVIN FITZPATRICK

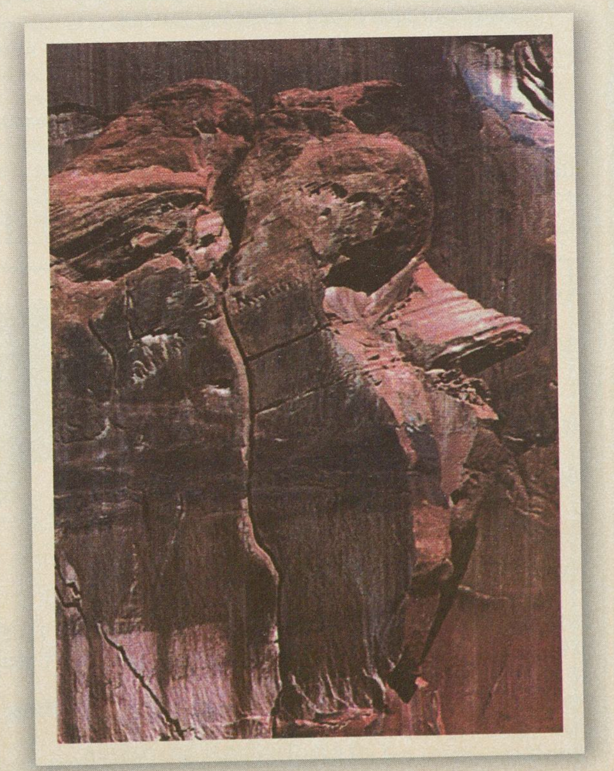
split personality



NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST

THIS Y-SHAPED WORM was dug up by Margot Howell in her back garden in Nottinghamshire, and is said to be the first ever observed. It is now in the Wollaton Hall Natural History Museum. Curator and taxidermist Don Sharp (right) said: "I have worked in museums for 40 years and have never seen a two-tailed earthworm or even heard of one. At first we thought it might have been damaged in some way and had grown the extra tail while its body was repairing itself; but the tail shows no sign of injury... We are not sure whether it has mutated or if it is some sort of Siamese twin. It is a complete mystery." *Nottingham Eve. Post, 9 Sept 1998.*

SIMULACRA CORNER



THIS ROCK, DUBBED NIXON IN NATURE OR TRICKY DICK MOUNT RUSHMORE, WAS TAKEN BY MICHAEL A KORY IN THE CANYON DE CHELLY, ARIZONA, NEAR ANCIENT ANASAZI CLIFF-DWELLING RUINS. IT WAS SENT TO US BY JEFFREY VALLANCE, *FT*'S LAS VEGAS CORRESPONDENT.

We are always glad to receive pictures of spontaneous forms and figures, or any curious images. Send them to the editorial post box (with a stamped addressed envelope or international reply coupon) and we'll pay a fiver or ten dollars for any we use.

ALIEN ZOO
CONTINUED

FINDING OUT

Since my item appeared in ***FT116*** concerning the mysterious magazine partwork from the early 1970s, my source, Caledonian cryptozoologist Alan Pringle, has succeeded in locating his friend from the early 1970s who once owned a complete set. Sadly, he no longer does so, but he did remember the partwork's title, which was *Finding Out*. So if anyone does have any of its issues, please let us know, just in case we can trace the artist(s) responsible for their cryptozoological illustrations, and learn whether these may be available for republication.

CHINESE PANTHERS?

ABCs of the black pantheresque variety have long been reported from Britain, continental Europe, North America, and even Australia, but now they seem to invading more exotic realms too. According to a recent Xinhua News Agency report, Chinese scientists claim to have evidence that 'American panthers' may be residing deep in the Qinling Mountains of northwest China's Shaanxi Province. Zheng Fengsong, a senior engineer of the Changqing Nature Reserve, spied one such beast here on 19 February 1998, which left behind "clear claw prints in the shape of a plum flower" that were duly photographed. Biologist Professor Liu Shifeng, from Northwest China University, added that back in 1984, a hunter had informed him that he had shot just such an animal on the hillside near his house in Taibai County, but did not retain the carcase. Liu considers that if "the rare American panthers are really proved to be there [in the Qinling Mountains], it will be a major discovery of wild animals". However, this is an odd report for various reasons. Firstly, black panthers (ie melanistic leopards) are not native to America (unless they are actually melanistic pumas?). Secondly, normal spotted leopards are known to exist in the Qinling Mountains, so what is so special about melanistic specimens also occurring here? (Confirmed melanistic Chinese leopards are already on record.) Thirdly, leopards do not typically leave behind clawed footprints (though it is not unknown for them to do so). I await further developments with particular interest. *http://info.xinhua.org/ 7 November 1998.*

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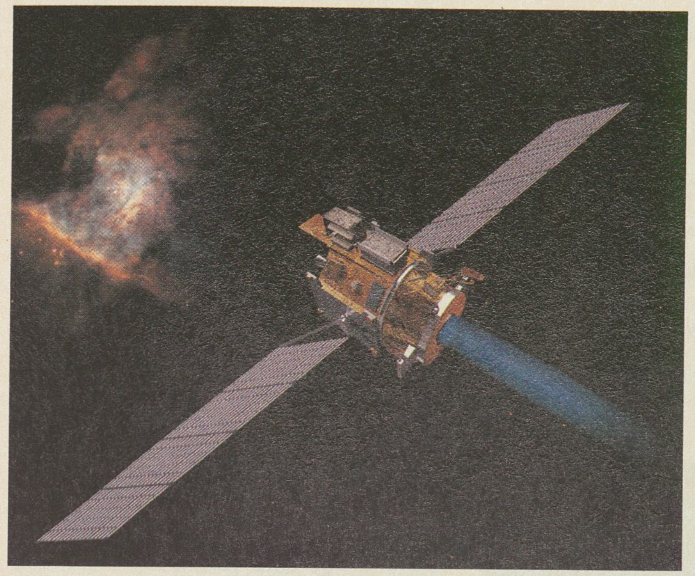
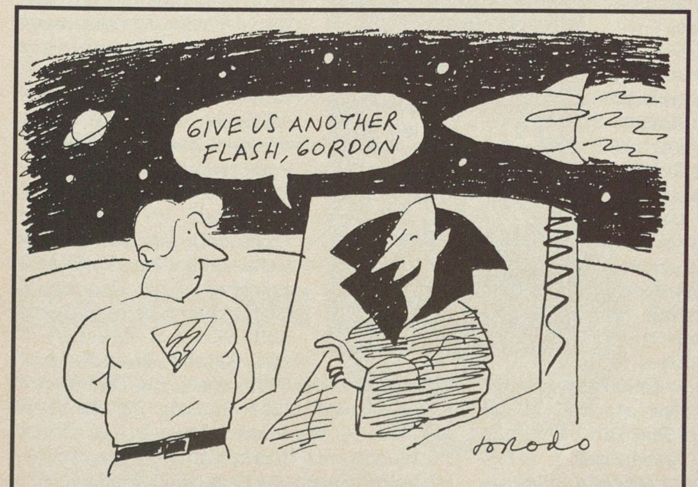

NASA

deep space, nein

ON 24 OCTOBER, NASA launched its $152 million experimental space probe Deep Space 1 (above). The probe used a highly-advanced ion propulsion system and was steered by a computer that makes course alterations without the need for human input. Although launched using conventional rocket technology, the probe was to be the first to use a solar-powered ion engine as its primary source of propulsion. Thanks to the economical ion engine, the 8.2ft (2.5m) high Deep Space 1 only needed to carry 180lbs (81kg) of xenon gas, hence the relatively low cost. The engine expels ionised atoms of xenon at 65,000mph (99,777km/h), leaving a blue exhaust. The probe was due to rendezvous with asteroid 1992 KD next July.

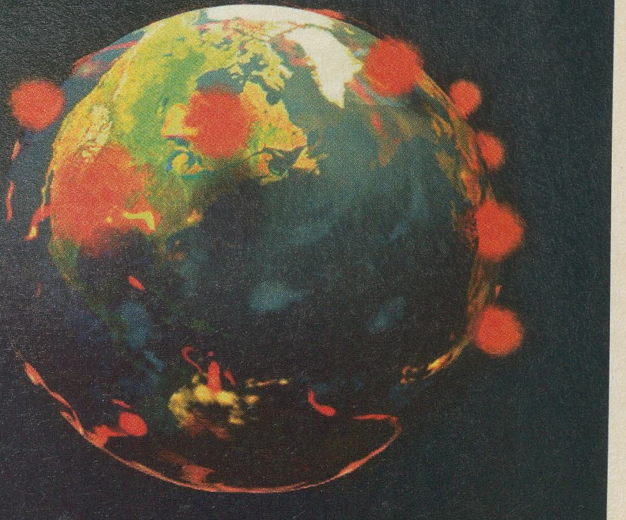
Unfortunately on 12 November, just 4.5 minutes after the ion engine was remotely switched on by NASA engineers, it cut out entirely. Nobody seems to know what caused this major glitch, but a Los Angeles-based theoretical nuclear physicist, Dr Franklin Reuhl, has suggested that extraterrestrials may have sabotaged the mission to prevent our deep space exploration efforts. "ETs might wish to restrict us in a non-forceful manner to our own domain of space," Reuhl told FT. "Even if these entities have not developed a spacefaring technology, they may have evolved powerful psychic abilities, which might have been directed at Deep Space 1. In other words, alien remote viewers may have been responsible for its failure! Aliens might have also zapped the 1993 NASA Mars probe and may have been responsible for the enigmatic disappearance of the Telstar 401 in January 1997, as well as the recent failure of the Galaxy 4 communications satellite. Obviously, I cannot prove any of these suppositions, but all are well within the realm of feasibility!" *CNN 24 Oct, 12 Nov 1998.*


GIVE US ANOTHER FLASH, GORDON

MING BEHAVING BADLY

PRE-MILLENNIAL TENSION

11 ISSUES AND COUNTING...


ALEXANDER TOMLINSON

AS DECEMBER 1999 INCHES CLOSER, GOVERNMENTS READY THEMSELVES FOR NUCLEAR REACTOR PROBLEMS, POWER OUTAGES, CASH SHORTAGES FROM MASS SAVINGS WITHDRAWALS AND PANIC BUYING, EVEN WE FORTEANS CANNOT REMAIN ALOOF FROM THE FORTHCOMING HYSTERIA. WE CAN, HOWEVER, REMAIN AMUSED. IN THE FIRST OF A 12-PART SERIES, DAVE WALSH PREPARES TO USHER IN A NEW ERA...

To begin with, 'the millennium' shouldn't really refer to an event on 1 January 2000, but to an arbitrary period of 1,000 years – the *change* of millennium gives us our cause for celebration. Somewhere along the way, we seem to have incorrectly equated 'millennium' with the *end* of a 1,000 year period.

Furthermore, while there's no denying that the Y2K computer bug certainly seems to be a reality, and the change of 1999 to 2000 (like a car odometer) has a romantic attraction, the 01/01/2000 start to a new millennium gives rise to a debate less trivial than one might think.

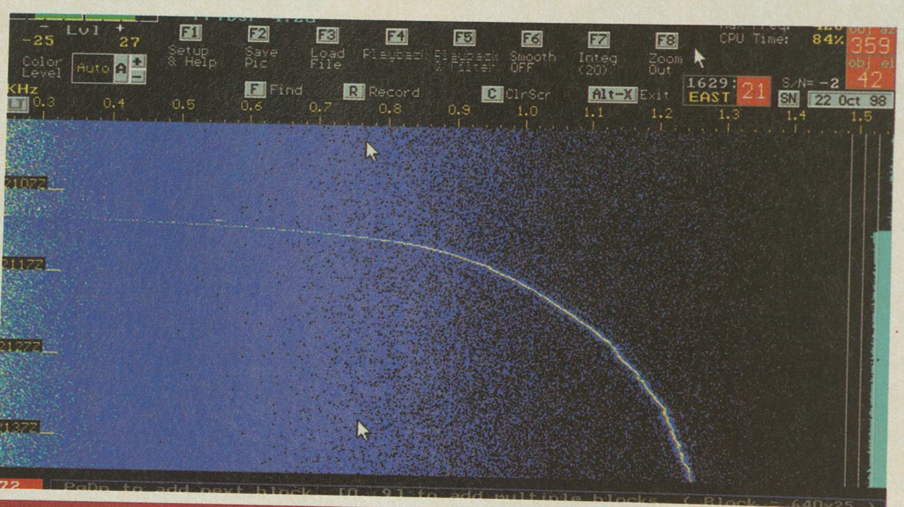
Blame Dionysius Exiguus (Dennis the Little). In 525 he was instructed by Pope St John I to prepare the 'Cyclus Paschalis', a history of the "Christian Era". Dionysius placed the birth of Christ at the beginning of year 1 AD – rather than 0 AD, so that Jesus was somehow one year old when born. If each century has 100 years (in this case 1,2,3... 100), then year 100 belongs to the century *preceding* it, and the new century starts on, eg 1 January 101, or the millennium on 01/01/2001. Wee Dennis is not entirely reproachable, however, as the concept of zero did not exist in 6th century Western mathematics. Elements of the media and 'élite' classes were apparently well aware of this, refraining from celebrating the 20th century until 01/01/1901, whilst the great unwashed got trashed on 31/12/1899.

There's a certain black humour in observing cults who expect the Apocalypse, the Y2K technology panic and the construction of monuments – all of which are based on the arbitrary decimal figure of 1,000, bearing no apparent relation to cycles upon earth or in the skies, but merely to the forgivable erroneous calculations of a 6th century cleric, who most people have never even heard of.

Y2K INFO: HTTP://WWW.Y2KSUPPLY.COM/

FORTEAN BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

SOMETIMES HOAXES CAN SPIN DANGEROUSLY OUT OF CONTROL. **MARK PILKINGTON** READIES THE SCALPEL TO PERFORM THE AUTOPSY OF ONE SUCH RUMOUR CONCERNING POSSIBLE ALIEN CONTACT.



REACH FOR THE STARS: Did the signal (above) picked up on 23 October really emanate from EQ Pegasi (below)?

BOTH PICTURES: http://members.aol.com/ufoseek/CapeCanaveralHall7193/latest.html

Hello, I am sending this along to inform you of a possible SETI Hit. On 23 October 1998, an anonymous amateur radio astronomer informed a closed internet mailing list for SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) enthusiasts that he had received a strong, repetitive signal. Getting no response, on 26 October he shifted his attentions to a more open list and uploaded digital images of his findings onto a Geocities website. The signals were being picked up on a frequency of approximately 1450mhz, from co-ordinates that roughly matched those of the star system EQ Pegasi, 21.97 light years away. This, observers were quick to point out, had in mid-September been the source of a signal that was briefly considered unusual by SETI crew members using the huge Arecibo dish in Puerto Rico. It only took them a few minutes to discover that it was a false alarm, but the results were left online for posterity.

Twenty-four hours after this latest signal was announced, the news had spread to every cosmically-minded newsgroup, mailing list and website on the planet. Within two days, BBC Online was running the story, as were *The Sun* newspaper, Art Bell's *Coast to Coast* radio show and numerous other media outlets. The world had taken the bait.

The worldwide SETI League was horrified. Since receiving the original message members had been unable to corroborate the findings using their 63 active radio telescopes, despite the whopping alleged signal to noise ratio of 10,000 to one. Meanwhile, their analysis of the two images posted on the Geocities site found that, other than the vertical shifting of the signal by a few pixels, they were identical, right down to the tiniest dots of noise – noise that should be random in a genuine signal. On 28 October Dr Paul Shuch, Executive Director of the SETI League, distributed a press release stating that this was an obvious hoax. But their message was drowned out in a frenzy of wishful thinking.

TO PICK UP ANY SUCH CLEAR DIRECT SIGNALS WOULD BE A MIRACLE

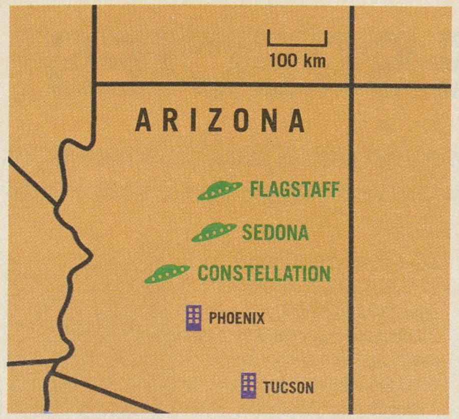
Trying another plan of attack, SETI list members identified the source of the mailings as one Paul Dore, apparently an employee of Siemens Plessey Systems in the UK and an amateur radio astronomer. The URL of his CV was made public for all to see. Nonplussed, Dore revealed that his findings had been corroborated by colleagues on the 300ft (100m) telescope at Effelsberg, Germany. Further bolstering his claims, a "K F Benton" on Guernsey contacted talk radio star Art Bell to say that he too was picking up the signal on his own 15ft (4.5m) dish. He was followed two days later by a "Jay Oka" in Tokyo. All these reported readings were at slightly different frequencies around the 1450mhz mark. A press conference, to be attended by Dore and the Effelsberg astronomers, was announced for the following week.

Doing their best to be heard above the noise, SETI and others pointed out that the area around 1450mhz is well known for heavy interference from satellites and other terrestrial sources. To pick up any such clear, direct signals at several frequencies in this range would be a miracle; to pick up three was nigh on impossible. All the while, the signal continued to prove elusive to anyone other than those reporting through the Geocities site. The mainstream media finally decided that the whole thing was a hoax after all. But those who wanted to believe were starting to get wind of a possible conspiracy, and they wouldn't be disappointed.

On the Geocities site, Dore said that black, unmarked vehicles were following him – he was even able to post photographs of two of them waiting outside his house. Neither car had any license plates – not very useful for discreet surveillance. An anonymous Glastonbury man emailed the site to say that he'd been followed by a similar vehicle after reporting a sighting of a black triangle UFO a year earlier.

Stranger emails followed. One purported to be from Bill Cooper, legendary right-wing militia leader and arch nemesis of the New World Order. "I predicted many years ago such a well planned hoax of 'alien contact' would be the beginning of a plot by the New World Order to take away the human rights of every citizen on this planet… I, as well as the Arizona Free Alliance, urge all free-minded people to 'dig in' and prepare to battle the Ever-Seeing-Eye."

Further apocalyptic flavouring was provided by a message allegedly from a member of the Concerned Christians, a Denver-based cult who had vanished in mid-October amid fears of a mass suicide: "These are the End Times as referenced in Revelations. All the signs are there, Wars and Rumors of Wars, Pestilance [sic], Corruption, and persecution of the righteous. Armegeddon shall soon be visited upon us and only those that follow the righteous path will be saved. December 7th, the first day of the new Millenium [sic] is to be our day of glory."

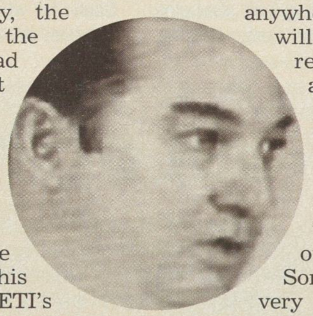


THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH: The three proposed landing sites in Arizona for the Hoagland probe.

On 3 November, 'Dore' dropped a bombshell – the press conference was cancelled, the entire affair was over. On returning home the previous day, he had encountered the people who had been following him. One, he claimed, was from Britain's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), one from RAF Feltwell and the third from the American National Security Agency (NSA). He had, they told him, been monitoring a secret military satellite, part of a 'Project 415'. He signed the Official Secrets Act and was to say nothing more about it. SETIs, however, pointed out that satellite carrier signals are commonly picked up by radio telescopes and are no secret – it's the heavily encrypted information they contain that is. The following day, the Geocities site displayed only the NSA logo; the information had vanished. It was now that what appeared to be the real Paul Dore popped up to say that, while he was an *X-Files* fan and an amateur radio astronomer, he was nothing to do with any of this and could it all stop, please. SETI's Paul Shuch, meanwhile, was despairing: "Real science has been jeopardised. It has set SETI back 100 years."

TALKING BACK: Richard Hoagland.

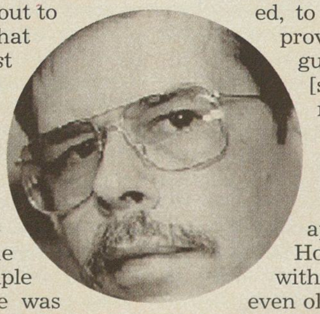
http://www.enterprisemission.com



EVE OF DESTRUCTION: Bill Cooper.

http://www.ufomind.com

By now, the saga was entering its second phase and things were about to get very, very strange. That evening on the *Coast to Coast* show, Art Bell and Richard Hoagland sought deeper meaning in the week's events. Impressed by 'Dore's' "consistent British -isms", and the apparent corroboration of multiple signals, they wondered if he was trying to direct us towards something else? Hoagland took the bait and ran with it. He'd been receiving messages of his own from various "reliable intelligence sources", all referring to a 'Project Samson' and 7 December – the date mentioned in the Concerned Christians' email. The key lay in "drift rates", the slight differences in the co-ordinates of the various signals received. Whatever it was, the signals' source was moving at considerable speed – in our direction. Hoagland revealed that Project Samson involved the landing and recovery of an alien spacecraft somewhere just north of Phoenix, Arizona – on 7 December. Perhaps the little town of Constellation, 50 miles northwest of the city?



I WANT TO BELIEVE: Art Bell.

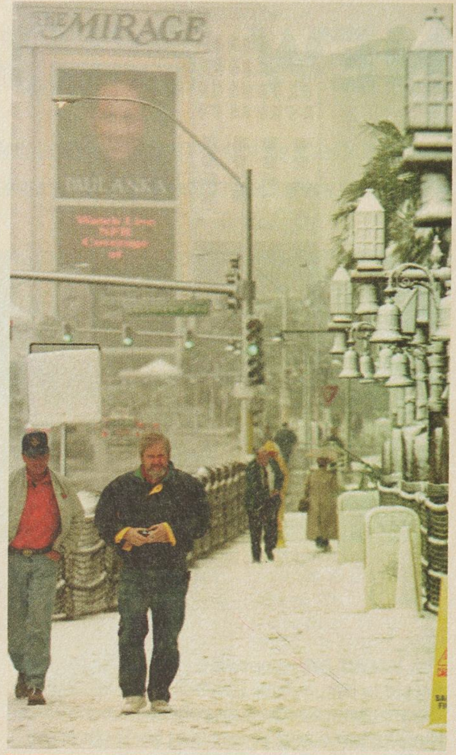
http://www.artbell.com

More information on Project Samson appeared, circulated by one Peter Gersten, director of the once respected Citizens Against UFO Secrecy (CAUS), dedicated to ending government UFO secrecy. As well as bizarre reports of the impending "Final Conflict" and "being activated" by the Pegasi signal, Gersten disseminated reports of increased military activity in the area of Mount Elden, near Flagstaff, Arizona – just north of Phoenix.

Before long, word was also filtering through New Age circles: the landing site had shifted south to the more spiritually-inclined Sedona – allegedly already the site of a vast "energy vortex" – and the object hurtling our way had transmuted into an "orb".

Now Bill Cooper re-entered the fray with a 14 November press release. "There is no unusual military activity anywhere in the State of Arizona whatsoever, " he wrote. "There is *no* Project Samson being conducted in Arizona or anywhere else. There will be *no* extraterrestrial landing anywhere in the great State of Arizona, or anywhere else for that matter, on December 7th or any other day. Someone is trying very hard to divert our attention from the Clinton impeachment proceedings and the impending Middle East War, which I predicted, to very elaborate but easily proven hoaxes… This hoax is guaranteed to fuel millenium [sic] fever neutralizing and removing all opposition to the war from deeply religious and superstitious people…"

As the appointed date approached, everyone but Hoagland dropped the story without explanation. By the 6th even old Hoagie had become cautious, speaking of a "major impact" rather than an ET landing. Meanwhile, rumours continued to abound – a huge roaring fireball was seen flying over Georgia; the Phoenix City Council were going to be "elsewhere" on the 7th; there was heightened military activity and "tunnelling" in the area.



VIVA LAS VEGAS: Getting the wrong kind of snow?

REUTERS

THE SIGNAL'S SOURCE WAS MOVING AT GREAT SPEED IN OUR DIRECTION

The fateful day itself brought no NWO invasion, but large areas of Arizona were engulfed by a localised freak blizzard. An inch (2.5cm) of snow fell in Las Vegas and temperatures in Phoenix were at their lowest for 19 years. Five inches (12.5cm) of snow caused roads to Sedona and Flagstaff to be cut off several hours – surely plenty of time for a discreet alien rendezvous.

Upon re-examination of the reverse speech analysis of William Cohen's speech, Hoagland was stunned to find the phrase "plan evil weather". Suddenly, it all made sense…

Come what may in the ensuing days, we can be sure that the major players in this millenarian dry run will continue to seek and continue to find exactly what it is they are looking for. Ironically, it is Peter Gersten who best sums up the situation: "EQ Pegasi was a signal whether it actually occurred or not. Remember we are dealing with messages where truth or falsity is irrelevant."

A mirror of the original EQ Pegasi news site: http://members.aol.com/ufoseek/CapeCanaveralHall7193/latest.html

Michael Theroux deconstructs the hoaxed signals: http://www.borderlands.com/newstuff/research/AMSETI.htm

NEW ORIGINS OF THE SPECIES

Recent discoveries raise the possibility that a vast aboriginal homeland covered much of Asia while the Maoris may not have been the first race to inhabit New Zealand. And what is the Irish influence in Iceland and east Africa?

YANSE MARTIN

MAORI MAN: Patrick Ruka, a Waitaha descendant, on one of the earthworks in Kaipara that may have been built by a South American civilisation.

THE MAORIS ARE supposed to have been the first people to land in New Zealand, about 800AD, but there is some evidence for habitation much earlier. Radiocarbon dating of rat bones on South Island by Richard Holdaway, a scientist in Christchurch, showed they were about 2,000 years old; and the experts maintain that rats could only have arrived with humans, as there were no indigenous mammals.

In 1991, an ancient 10ft (3m) statue of a woman not in the Maori style was found in a forest at Kaipara in the far north of the country and taken to Dargaville museum, curated by Noel Hilliam. Hilliam has recently found a series of overgrown circular banks not far from where the statue came. He maintains these are quite unlike the many ancient Maori sites he has examined over 40 years. He says that local Maori oral tradition tells of a race that lived in the area for more than 1,000 years before their own arrival. According to Hilliam, the descendants of those earlier settlers survive as the Waitaha people, now regarded as a Maori tribe. A recent blood test on a Waitaha woman revealed a factor otherwise only seen in Peru. Most of the 1,400 Waitahas live in the South Island, to which their own legend says they fled from the more warlike Maoris.

Another researcher, Gary Cook, has spent the past three years photographing and recording stone structures that he says are also pre-Maori. He says that the Waipoua Forest, also in the province of northland, conceals a "treasure trove" of such artefacts. *D.Telegraph, 11 June 1998.*

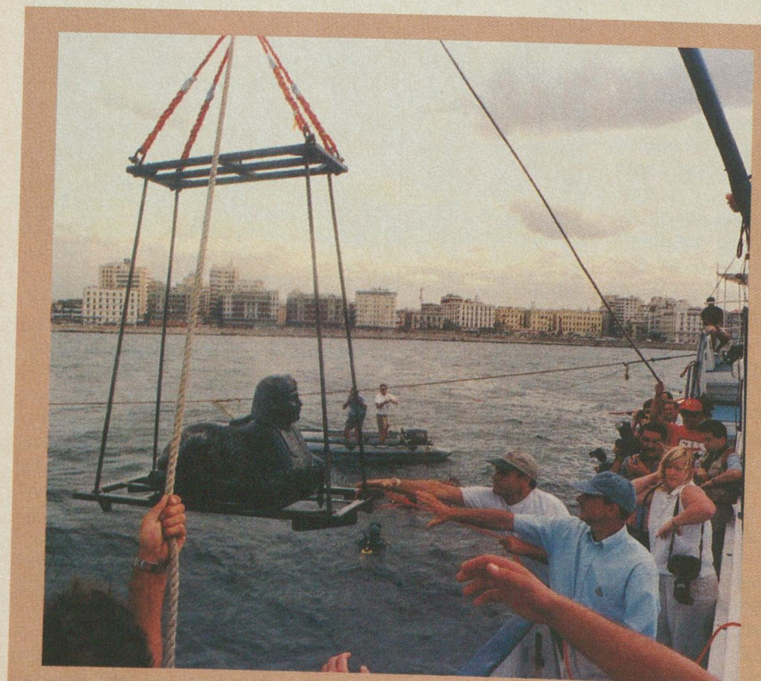
DR WALTER NEVES, Professor of Biological Anthropology at the University of São Paulo in Brazil, believes that America was inhabited by Australian Aborigines long before the arrival of the Mongoloid "native Americans" over the Bering Strait. He has about 40 human skulls unearthed in Brazil and Columbia and dating from 14,000 to 10,000 years ago, which have identical morphologies with those of early Australian skulls – exceptionally thick bones in the cranial vault, massive brow ridges and a forward-thrusting lower face. Brazilian researchers have been combing the world's museums for ancient American skulls. Dr Neves has tracked down material in Scandinavia, Britain and the United States.

His thesis is that Australia and adjacent islands are merely the last surviving territory of a once-vast aboriginal homeland that covered much of East and Southeast Asia – ancient aboriginal-type skulls have been found in China and Korea. In southern Brazil, Dr Neves suspects that the Jé Indians preserve physical and linguistic aboriginal traits, as did the extinct Tierra del Fuego Indians, the last of whom died just 30 years ago.

It is widely believed that Australia was colonised 60,000 years ago when the 80-mile Timor gap was crossed, probably on bamboo rafts; and the same Australoid people might have reached America by island-hopping. Using the Indonesian, Philippine, Ryuku, Japanese, Kuril and Aleutian island chains and archipelagos, the 4,000-mile journey can still be undertaken with no single sea voyage of more than 120 miles.

Australian National University prehistorian Dr Alan Thorne, who has seen photographs of Dr Neves' American skulls, said they closely resemble ancient skulls he found in a burial ground at Kow Swamp, near Barham in northern Victoria, and similar skulls found at Cossack in Western Australia, the Willandra Lakes near Balrenaid in New South Wales, and at Talgai on the Darling Downs in Queensland. Unlike Dr Neves, however, he thinks America was settled not by island-hopping but across pack ice in the Bering Strait. *Brisbane Courier Mail, 4+7 April; Independent, 6 April 1996.*

ACCORDING TO A report in *New Scientist* in May 1996, Irishmen and Icelanders share exactly the same blood groups, while the people of Norway, where the Icelanders are supposed to have originated, have an entirely different mix of blood groups. There is also bizarre evidence of Irish influence in east Africa – or vice versa. John Wilson spent 30 years with the Karamojong tribe in Kenya and found that 570 of their words are close to Gaelic. *Teth* is the Gaelic for hot, which is *tet* in Karamojong. *Tan* (Gaelic for cattle raid) translates as *tengalar* in Karamojong. And the Gaelic for wheeze, *carrasan*, becomes *karesion*. *D.Express, 30 May 1996; D.Record, D.Star, 8 Dec 1994.*



AP

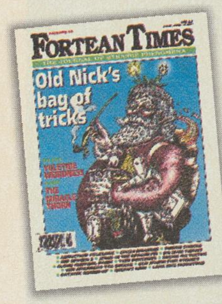
out of the ruins

THE RUINS OF Alexandria, engulfed by a tidal wave following an earthquake in AD365, are being uncovered from the silt and effluent of the modern harbour by Franck Goddio's international team of archæologists working for the last five years with satellite imaging, radar and high-powered dredging equipment. One of the discoveries is the well-preserved wreck of a ship lying in Cleopatra's private harbour, carbon dated to the first century BC and believed by the romantically-inclined to be the vessel in which the beguiling queen plied the Nile and seduced Mark Anthony. A neat hole in the hull suggests it was rammed by another boat.

A sphinx and an important religious statue were hauled 20ft (6m) to the surface on 28 October. The dark grey granite 825lb (374kg) sphinx, identified as Cleopatra's father, Ptolemy XII Auletes, was one of a pair flanking the statue at the entrance to a small temple to Isis, goddess of love, within Cleopatra's Royal Palace on the island of Antirrhodes in the Eastern Harbour. The lifesize 550lb (250kg) statue of a priest in a flowing mantle carrying a jar topped with an image of Osiris, the god of the dead, is shaven-headed, but wears a fringe portraying an important figure from early Roman times. *Sunday Times, 25 Oct; Times, Edinburgh Eve. News, 29 Oct 1998.*

FORTEAN FOLLOW-UPS

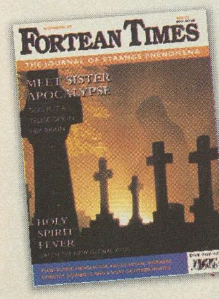
In which we return to some of the tales reported in the pages of Fortean Times to find out what happened next. This month, we take another bite with some missing gnashers at ancient men and the BVM.



ICE-MAN THAWS [*FT60:14, 62:12, 66:18*]

The body of a man found in 1991 in the Ötztaler Alpine glacier on the Italian-Austrian border about 5,200 years after his death, continues to yield new information. Archæologist Dr Konrad Spindler and his colleague Dr Leopold Dorfer have found that nine of the 13 puncture marks on the body, previously believed to be ornamental tattoos, coincided with accepted needle sites in modern Chinese acupuncture. Their speculation was that the marks could be interpreted as "a kind of permanent acupuncture therapy" practised by Neolithic man. Ötzti (as he is nicknamed) went on public display on 28 March 1998 in a refrigerated case at a new archæological museum in Italy.

Ötzti was initially thought to be a hunter, as he carried a bow and an axe. But the arrows for the bow were not finished and the bow was unstrung. Analysis of his hair has revealed that his diet was lacking in meat and dairy products, at least for the last few months of his life, according to Stephen Macko, professor of environmental science at the University of Virginia. Hair "is a terrific archive of information", Prof Macko told the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America in Toronto. "Today's breakfast is next week's hair." *[AFP] 21 Oct; D.Telegraph, 27 Oct 1998.*

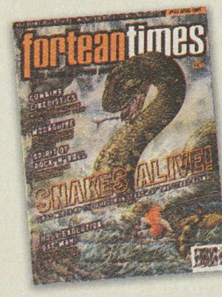


STOLEN DENTURES [*FT77:19*]

The theft of dentures has resumed in the western Dutch city of Alphen Aan de Rijn after a lull of four years. In March 1994, two sets of false teeth were stolen and there were seven attempted denture thefts. A mystery caller persuaded the victims that their dentures needed expert examination in a survey of denture discomfort – they were to hang them on their front door knobs in plastic bags to be collected by courier and returned the next day. The teeth were never seen again.

A day after picking up his false teeth from the repair shop this summer, a 44-year-old man was telephoned and asked to give the teeth to an assistant because there had been a mistake. They were duly picked up, but were not returned. The repair shop knew nothing about it.

On 4 August, someone claiming to be a civil servant with the health ministry persuaded a 48-year-old woman in Utrecht to hand over her teeth for research into the link between false teeth, headaches and neck pain. Once she had given her consent. a courier picked them up and she was left gnashing her gums. *[ANP] 2 Sept 1998.*



THE VIRGIN OF CLEARWATER [*FT97:8*]

The office building in Clearwater, Florida, where many people believe they can see the image of the Virgin Mary, housed the offices of the Ugly Duckling used-car company until it was leased on 10 July to a Catholic group, the Ohio-based Shepherds of Christ Ministries. The rainbow-coloured image on the windows of the building – which believers call the Miracle on Drew Street – has attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors since it was first noticed in December 1996. The Shepherds plan to open a religious bookstore soon, according to Executive Director Paul Rush, who said the group had 2,000 members in the USA and published a newsletter for priests.

Experts who have examined the image say they believe it was created by corrosion of the metallic elements in the smoky coating on the glass, but Rush has no doubt that it depicts the Virgin Mary. The group has put a statue of Jesus in the parking lot in front of the image and was holding daily evening prayer services. Rush said it hoped to raise money to operate the building through donations and by selling tiles that will be displayed with the names of donors. The group would need permission from the local Catholic diocese before it could open a chapel at the site. The diocese has not taken any position on the authenticity of the image, which covers nine large panes of glass and appears to show the outline of a person's head and upper body. There are other rainbow-coloured swirls on the building, but none in a recognisable pattern. *Philadelphia Inquirer, 28 Dec 1997; [R] 14 July 1998.*

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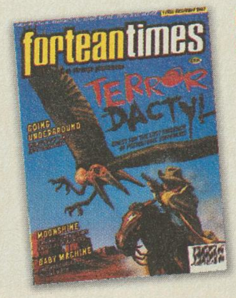
TALK RADIO
STALKER
BRIEF ENCOUNTERS
HELL'S BELLES
HIT AND RUN HAUNTINGS ON THE GHOST HIGHWAY

FOREFATHERS' FOOTSTEPS [*FT104:17*]

The world's oldest footprints made by an anatomically modern human, found in 1995 on the rocky shore of Langebaan Lagoon in South Africa and dated to 117,000 years, were cut out in a block of crumbly sandstone strengthened with resin and hoisted by helicopter onto a truck which drove them the 60 miles (97km) to a Cape Town museum on 23 June to save them from vandals and the elements. The distance from Langebaan to Cape Town was variously given as 50, 60,75 and 93 miles (80, 97, 121 and 150km).

That same week, David Roberts and Lee Berger, the scientists who discovered the Langebaan prints, announced the discovery of other prints of anatomically modern humans in sandstone on the Eastern Cape coast which could be as much as 230,000 years old, almost twice the age of the others. This date will need to be confirmed by further radiometric tests. *D.Telegraph, 22 June; [R,AP] Times, 24 June; Independent, 4 July; New Scientist, 11 July 1998.*



RIVERS OF FLAMES [*FT105:22*]

The mysterious beach-ball-sized lights that float to the surface of the Mekong River near Nongkai in Thailand during the full moon in October, before shooting into the sky like missiles, also occur in an adjacent area to the north, within Laos. They arise both from the river and from nearby rice paddies. The Thai/Lao name for them is the Nekha Lights, the nekha being a large fish which lives in the local waters and is seen in great numbers on the river surface at certain times of the year. Many Lao and Thai people travel to the area hoping to see the lights, which vary in intensity and in some years are barely visible, if at all. They have been filmed and have featured on Thai television. Why they appear only during the full moon in October, usually only on one night, is a complete mystery. The duration of a display is about 30 minutes and there was a particularly dramatic show in 1996. *New Scientist, 20/27 Dec 1997.*

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SHRUNKEN HEADS
MIND OVER MATTER
BIGFOOT PRINTS
LOST TRIBE
HOLY MACKEREL!
FISHFALL FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

STRANGE TUSCAN SNOOZE [*FT106:19*]

Between April and September 1997, 13 apparently healthy residents of the Tuscan village of Camigliano (or Corte Bosco), all over 40, fell into a prolonged comatose sleep for periods of between 15 and 36 hours. Doctors described the outbreak as "hypersomnia with transitory global amnesia", but were at a loss to explain it. There was much debate about whether to blame the phenomenon on the local water, air, nearby aerials for mobile phones, radioactivity or even UFOs.

On 21 September 1998, a married couple went on trial accused of lacing the victims' drinks and food with a sedative over a period of months. It was alleged that Mariano and Claudia Rocchi, both 45, aimed to create an impression that the people were ill by slipping into fellow villagers' kitchens and putting drops of tavor, a sleeping draught, into their drinks soups and food. The couple hoped they would be employed as carers and helpers to run errands, in return for money. *D.Telegraph, 22 Sept 1998.*

HUNT EMERSON

strange deaths

JONATHAN CAPEWELL, 16, was so obsessed with smelling fresh that he would cover his entire body with deodorant at least twice a day. When his parents told him he was using too much and they could taste the stuff downstairs in the kitchen, he laughed it off. He was found dead following a heart attack on 29 July after spraying himself with anti-perspirant in his bedroom in Oldham, Greater Manchester. Three empty deodorant canisters were found. A post mortem showed that his body contained 0.37mg of butane per litre of blood and a similar amount of propane. Only 0.1mg of either gas can kill. It is believed the gases built up in his body after six months of intensive spraying. The death was thought to be the first from accidental inhalation in the country and there was no evidence to suggest he was a solvent abuser. *Manchester Eve. News, 28 Oct; Guardian, D.Telegraph, Independent, Northern Echo, 29 Oct 1998.*

NELL REIN, 66, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease and lived in a nursing home in Jackson, Mississippi, died after being bitten all over her body hundreds of times by fire ants while she lay in bed. Staff found her, still covered in ants, in the early morning of 30 August and she died four days later from heart failure brought on by physiological stress. *[AP] 26 Sept 1998.*

MRS HAZEL MURPHEY awoke in a Houston, Texas, motel to find hundreds of Brazilian fire ants, each as big as a thumbnail and the world's largest ants, crawling over the bed she was sharing with her husband. The husband died from the bites. *D.Telegraph, 4 Oct 1991.*

JOSE RICART, 53, was run over and killed by a truck while crossing the road in Burgos, Spain, while carrying a banner which proclaimed: "The end of the world is nigh". *Sun, 18 Sept 1998.*

P KANATAZAN, 33, having sex with his wife, Lim Set Lee, 36, accidentally killed her when he tried to silence her moans of passion with a pillow. He was jailed for 18 months in Perak, Malaysia. *Sun, 29 July 1998.*

MYTH CONCEPTIONS

HUNT EMERSON & MAT COWARD

⑥ THE EQUINOX EGGS

THE BACKGROUND

It's impossible to make a raw egg stand or spin on end – other than on one magical day of the year. In the USA, it seems, this is a Well-Known Fact, annually demonstrated on TV, and even taught in schools. One suggested explanation is that only on the day (or the very hour, some say) of the Spring Equinox (also the Autumn Equinox, in some versions) does the Sun's gravity "line up" with that of the Earth.

THE TRUTH

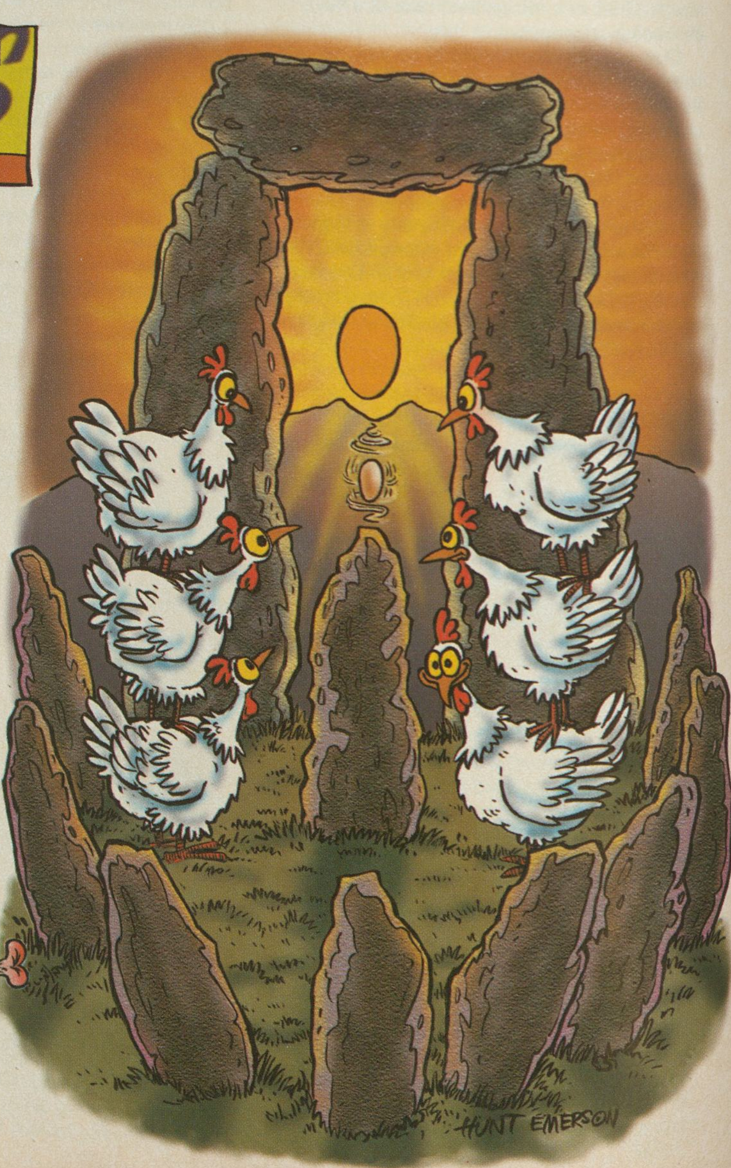
Spinning raw eggs is never easy – but then nothing that is really worthwhile in life ever is, right? I am pleased to report, however, that rigorous experimental work has been done on this matter, which concluded that the success or otherwise of your egg erection efforts depends not on the calendar, but on the viscosity of the individual egg's innards, the surface upon which the egg is spun, and whether or not you've got the DTs.

SOURCES: FT reader Dave Sacerdote of Connecticut became aware of this story in the 1980s, and noted the obvious mythological connection between eggs and springtime. He steered me towards a superbly sceptical website http://smart.net/~badastro/bad/egg_spin.html which in turn has a link to the Science Alliance.

DISCLAIMER: Truth can never be contained within a single shell. If you have eggformation to add, don't brood on it – hatch it out and throw it at *FT*.

MYTHCHASER

By the time you're a grandparent, will there be any youngsters around to teach you how to suck eggs? Well, according to some dissident demographers, the coming "grey crisis" is nothing but an old husband's tale, put about by anti-welfare politicians. If you're old enough to know better, let *FT* sit on your knee while you reminisce.



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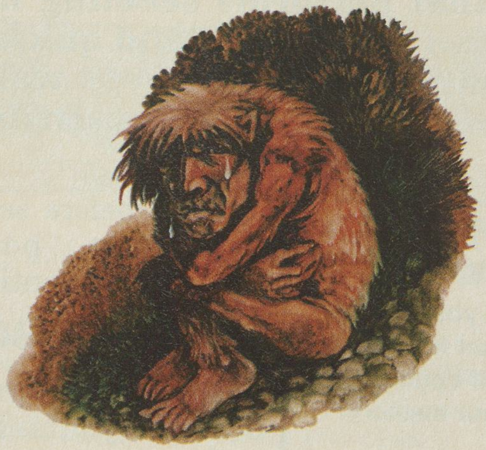
NAGS TO WITCHES

FOR MANY MODERN AFRICANS, THE WORLD IS STILL FRAUGHT WITH SUPERNATURAL THREAT; A DANGEROUS PLACE IN WHICH EVERY CREATURE, NO MATTER HOW SEEMINGLY INNOCUOUS, COULD BE A WITCH IN DISGUISE. AS SOUTH AFRICA IS DECIDING HOW TRADITIONAL WITCHCRAFT SHOULD BE TREATED IN LOCAL AND JUDICIAL COURTS, **FRANS PRINS** AND **SIAN HALL** REVEAL THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM, INVOLVING SOME VERY FORTEAN PHENOMENA.



TOKOLOSHE BY PENNY MILLER/T.V BULPIN PUBLICATIONS (PTY) LTD

A young man lay still and quiet in the tall dusty grass of the southern African bush. Every small movement set the grass crackling in the heavy stillness of the night. In a hollow nearby lay his father, screened by the heavily thorned branches of an acacia tree. Occasionally there is a shrill outburst from cicadas and the grunt of a foraging warthog. Above them, a quarter moon throws some little illumination on the chicken pen and goat *kraal* some metres to their right.

For months a hyena had been launching daring attacks on the animal enclosures and almost always left with some reward. This night, they determine, will be the hyena's last. That uncanny animal possesses an almost human intelligence which sets the local Tswana people whispering that it is no ordinary hyena but a wizard. They know his identity – an elderly man living on his own in the village.

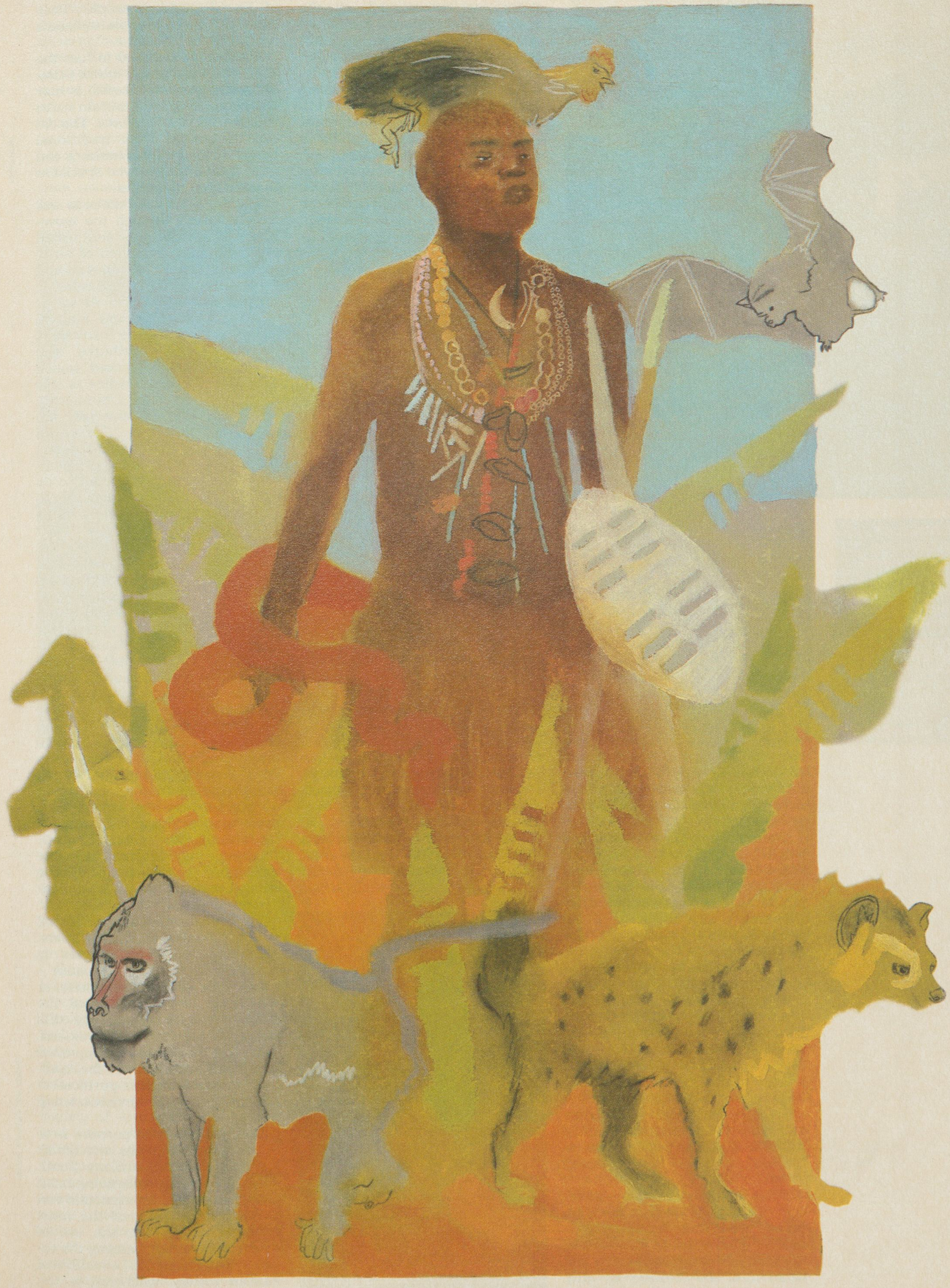
Suddenly the grass parts and two huge orange orbs shine in the dim light with a supernatural quality. A shot rings out, then a yelp, and the night swallows the animal. The next morning an examination of the scene shows hyena spoor and spots of blood leading directly to the village where the Tswana farm labourers live and to the hut of the alleged witch. On knocking, there is no answer so they open the door to find the elderly man lying on a sleeping mat and blankets, apparently ill. In his buttock is a rifle shot wound.

This is a true incident told us by a family member. It took place on a farm near the town of Phalaborwa in South Africa's Northern Province, an area in which witch accusations and witch killings are rife, even today. It is only one of many similar incidents that have been experienced, often in disbelief, by white English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.

The similarities between witchcraft in mediæval Europe and witchcraft in South Africa are many; including gathering at secret covens and carousing naked at nocturnal rituals. Both feature cannibalism and an ability to flit through the air undetected, only in Africa the European witch's broom is replaced by a loaf of brown bread. In African mythology, witches ride naked backwards on baboons during the witching hour.

Perhaps the most striking similarity concerns the witches familiar, or helper, which may include known animals as well as mythical creatures such as the zombie and the *Tokoloshe* (above) (created by a witch's sexual relations with a baboon familiar). Familiars are not always visible, but may sometimes be seen by certain children and traditional diviners (witchdoctors). They can also manifest as inexplicable dancing lights.

MAIN ILLUSTRATION BY **INGRID COLE**



SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS: African *sangomas* (diviners), pictured here in traditional regalia, are consulted to "sniff out" suspected witches.

FRANS PRINS

The hyena is the African equivalent of the European black cat; it is an outcast, a sniggering, smelly scavenger that staggers about the African landscape, chops drooling, searching for handouts from other, greater, predators such as lions and leopards. Other creatures believed to jump snappily to the hag's request: some – like civets and polecats – with dog or cat-like features and some – like baboons (often called "the professor of witches") – with almost human attributes, all underlining the impression of them as 'in-between' animals.

During their noctambulations witches may transform into the shape of any of these animals and their nightly escapades go largely unnoticed. One instance of transformation is a case presented to the Venda Supreme Court in 1987. On 20 September 1985 a young Venda man, Naletzane Netshiavha, was roused at night by a scratching on the door of his hut. When he received no reply to his enquiry, he became frightened and picked up an axe to protect himself, if need be, before opening the door. He saw a strange animal that looked like a large bat hanging from the rafters of his roof. He struck at it with his axe and it fell to the ground. Grasping his wife by the hand, they sped to his brother's *kraal* (fenced homestead) for help.

When they returned with relatives and lamps, they saw that the creature he had injured was dragging its tattered body towards the fence of the yard. He struck at it again and again until the creature lay still. A large group of onlookers approached for a better view, every one of whom later described a different creature to the court. To some it was a small donkey and to others it was a bat, but most agreed that the animal then turned into the body of a child with the head of an adult, before developing an adult body. They identified him as Jim Nephalama, an old man in his seventies, a reputed wizard who boasted he could do what he wished with people. Only after the initial shock, did it occur to the group that a murder had been committed.

To make a strange story even more bizarre, another of Naletzane's brothers – Gideon (a taxi-cab driver) – on his way to the *kraal*, found his vehicle being chased by two animals. In self-defence, he decided he would knock them down, soon discovering that one was a hyena and the other a genet. On arriving at his borther's *kraal*, he found a large crowd gathered there, witnesses to Naledzane's act of violence.

When the matter came before a white judge in the Supreme Court, the unfortunate arbitrator did not fully grasp the complexity of the events and came to the obvious conclusion that Naledzane should have realised that the creature was a human being and that he behaved in a irresponsible and violent manner. Naledzane was convicted of culpable homicide and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

HUGE SEXUAL ORGANS THAT HE WRAPS ABOUT HIS NECK

This is just one of many similar cases presented to the courts throughout Africa today, involving allegations of transformation into familiars including dogs, monkeys, leopards, tortoises, snakes, crocodiles, scorpions, pigs, donkeys, antelope and owls, to name but a few.

The *Tokoloshe* is described as a little man, not more than about 3ft (1m) tall, hairy, with huge sexual organs which he carefully wraps about his neck and shoulders. The most dangerous type is believed to live in the rivers of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, homeland of Xhosa-speaking people. They have the most elaborate beliefs regarding the *Tokoloshe*.

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS: Dried animals and horns are used in the witchcraft rituals.

ANDREW BANNISTER; ABPL/CORBIS

Witches are believed to lure the *Tokoloshe* with special *muthis* (a traditional concoction of herbs), or may create one by mixing certain herbs with the fat of a *Tokoloshe*. This fat can be bought from traditional herbal shops in Johannesburg and from Indian traders who specialise in traditional medicines.

The belief in the *Tokoloshe* was largely spread through the movement of people between urban and rural areas in search of work, especially on the gold mines around Johannesburg. Today the belief is present as far north in Africa as Zambia and Malawi, where the *Tokoloshe* is not attributed the same marked sexual characteristics as it is in its homeland. Women especially are terrified of the *Tokoloshe* and sexual dreams are immediately attributed to its machinations. To guard against this, women raise their beds upon bricks lest the *Tokoloshe* act as their bed warmer for the evening.

It may seem incongruous in this age of nuclear physics and space technology, but the belief in witchcraft and the practice of witch-burnings is rife among Bantu-speaking groups. Interestingly, the autochthonous people of southern Africa – the San Bushmen – never practised witchcraft. This changed dramatically when Bantu-speaking agriculturalists invaded the sub-continent during the Iron Age, around 2,000 years ago, bringing with them a new and complex system of beliefs. To them, witchcraft was a means of explaining misfortune and dealing with stress and tensions in their community.

When misfortune hits traditional society, diviners or 'witch-sniffers' are consulted. The diviner is expected to identify the cause – usually the ill-will of ancestors, or witchcraft – and then heal the patient who is usually, by this stage, highly traumatised. Ancestors can usually be appeased by animal sacrifice, but the spellbound require various purification and protection ceremonies using herbs.

The diviners' real purpose is to oppose and eradicate witchcraft and restore social harmony. South Africa is a society undergoing rapid change and, besides economic and political stress, one of the most common reasons for the use of witchcraft is conflict among the co-wives of a polygamist. In traditional African society, witchcraft is the means of resolving social conflicts and stress.

In rural areas today, decades of active missionary work have done little to alter the age-old belief system which is as relevant in African society today as it was during the Iron Age, although now it is sometimes appropriated for political purposes. For example, diviners were implicated in fanning a witch craze during the previous government, when highly politicised radical African youths forced diviners to identify 'witches'. These 'witches' – often killed by placing burning vehicle tyres around their necks – were usually people who worked for, or sympathised with, the government. If the diviners refused, they risked their own lives. An investigation commissioned by the South African government in 1995 to investigate witchcraft and ritual murder found that, in many of these cases, young militants had forced local communities against their wishes to contribute money for consulting such diviners.

MEPL

TRUST ME, I'M A DOCTOR: An elaborately dressed witchdoctor of southern Africa encountered by the American traveller William Seabrook.

During the years leading up to the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the first democratic elections in South Africa, there was an increase in the number of accusations of witchcraft and the hideous witch-related tyre-burnings. This was a tragic episode in the country's history – more intense even than many other historically documented witch crazes in other parts of the world, such as at Salem in America. It is estimated that up to 400 people were burnt as witches between 1987 and 1996.

THIS TRAGIC EPISODE WAS MORE INTENSE THAN SALEM

Many victims escaped by heading for the nearest police station and, once there, were afraid to leave. 'Witch villages' sprang up in the vicinity of police stations – entire villages consisting of accused witches living in constant fear of their lives – probably the best known of which are at Acornhoek, Lebowakgomo and Matlala in the Northern Province. Some of these unfortunate refugees believe that they are actually witches and confess to having practised witchcraft.

In most African countries, magic and witchcraft are now prohibited by a variety of laws, which more often than not are ignored by the local communities who regard magic and witchcraft as everyday events.

The previous South African government denied the existence of witchcraft, regarding it as superstitious nonsense and at odds with the work of the Church. Today witchcraft has been brought within the scope of criminal law because the authorities realised that it inspired a significant number of deaths and injury. There remains a conflict between the traditional courts' uncritical acceptance of witchcraft and the formal court's refusal to recognise it. In the past, traditional courts condemned 'witches' or 'sorcerers' to be severely beaten, or even killed, while others were ostracised and their homes and belongings destroyed to remove the taint. Some traditional courts and family gatherings still take it upon themselves to have witch trials, even though this is now unquestionably illegal.

Cases of witchcraft fall under the Witchcraft Suppression Act No. 3 (1957), which provides for the suppression of witchcraft and similar practices and, strictly speaking, also includes traditional African divination. But the law is currently being assessed and, although witchcraft is still condemned, the practices of traditional healing and divining are now being given constitutional protection. This implies that witchcraft will soon be regarded as a reality to be confronted and not magicked away as mere superstition. In this way some form of control can be exerted, preventing witch-hunts escalating to mass hysteria as in the Naletzane killing.

But what makes witchcraft such a persistent problem in African society? The African mentality interprets the world through fortune or misfortune. Any domestic or social calamity is cause for the suspicion of witchcraft. It is in the forefront of people's minds, either consciously or unconsciously, for much of their waking and sleeping hours. In extreme cases, people live in a state of perpetual fear. Part of the reason why unusual events such as the one which begins this article are described differently by different people is because each person experiences a projection of their own personal fears within the communal consensus about the outside threat.

Legally then, witchcraft in Africa has come full circle, but it remains to be seen how the Constitutional Courts will deal with witchcraft accusations in a new South Africa. For now, to be an individual in a traditional African society is to live in a world fraught with supernatural threat.

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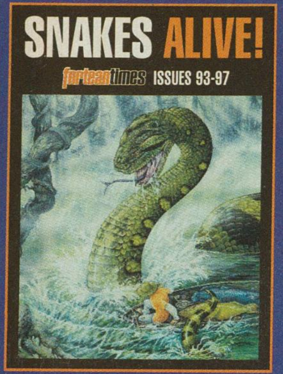

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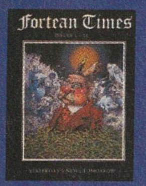

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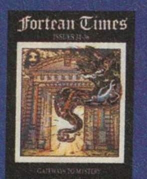

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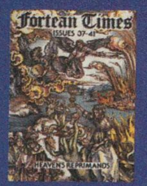

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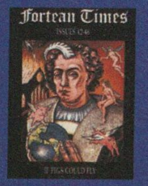

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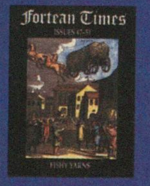

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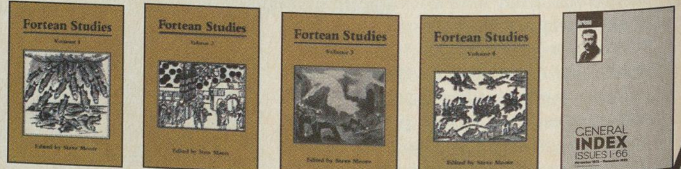

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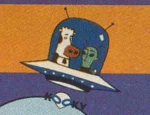

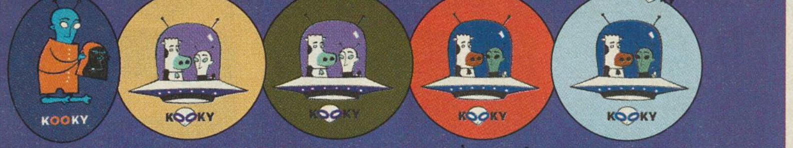

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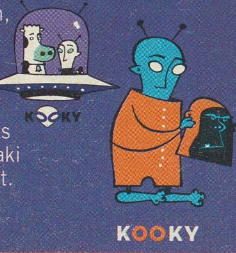

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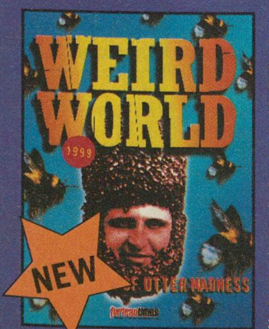

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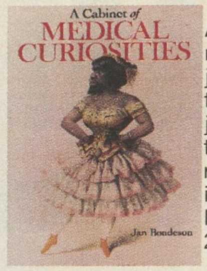

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CHUNDERWONDER

A FROG IN YOUR THROAT? WE'VE ALL BEEN ASKED THAT, BUT NONE OF US ACTUALLY BELIEVE IN AMPHIBIAN-INFESTED GULLETS. IT'S A FIGURE OF SPEECH – ISN'T IT? JAN BONDESON SAYS MOST CASES TURN OUT TO BE IMPOSTURES BUT THERE ARE WELL-ATTESTED MEDICAL ACCOUNTS OF BIZARRE UPRISINGS IN THE INTERIOR. ILLUSTRATED BY JAMIE HEWLETT. MAIN PHOTO BY ALEX HOWE.

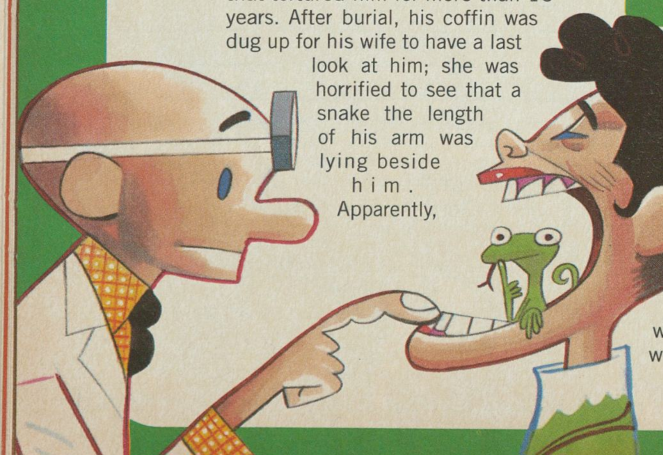
A 6th century German record describes a young lad with a snake in his stomach. He was taken to a holy woman who could feel it moving in his intestines. Her magic formula was to fasten a small cross to a vine-leaf and tie it to the boy's stomach. This had the desired effect and, in a volcanic opening of his bowels, the so-called 'bosom serpent' was expelled like a projectile.

Stories of people who believed that they had frogs – or even lizards and snakes – living and growing in their stomachs can be traced as far back as ancient Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia. Antiquarian medical histories, from the 16th and 17th centuries in particular, and early works on zoology often contain stories of snakes, frogs, toads and newts living in the human stomach.

Conrad Gesner (1516-1565) reported a strange epidemic that killed more than 3,000 people where snakes and newts were seen to leave the dead bodies and two snakes were found in the stomach of a recently-dead young woman. Another sad instance of the post mortem diagnosis of a snake in the stomach was reported in the old *Ephemerides*. A shoemaker had committed suicide, stabbing himself to death to escape the intractable stomach pains that tortured him for more than 10 years. After burial, his coffin was dug up for his wife to have a last look at him; she was horrified to see that a snake the length of his arm was lying beside him. Apparently, it had exited through the stab wound.

According to his *Des Monstres et Prodigies*, Ambroise Paré (c.1510-1590) also encountered the bosom serpent. In 1561, he met a Parisian woman of doubtful reputation who had caused a great uproar in Paris with her claim to have a snake in her stomach. She said it had crawled into her while she slept in a hemp field. Many Parisians came to see her and feel the snake's motions in her stomach for themselves. Paré threatened her with an extremely powerful laxative, whereupon she admitted that the story was pure invention. Six days later, she was to be seen standing near the Montmartre Gate, again inviting men to feel the snake in her stomach.

THE WOMAN VOMITED THIRTEEN TOADS AND A FLOOD OF SPAWN



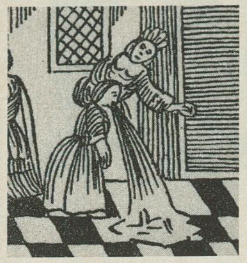
The most famous of all the German cases was that of Catharina Geisslerin, widely known as "the toad-vomiting woman of Altenburg". In 1642, she took the first step towards notoriety by vomiting several toads and lizards. After two years of repeat performances, her spectacular toad-vomiting abruptly ceased in the presence of Dr Thomas Rheinesius, the physician-in-ordinance to the Elector of Saxonia. He experimented with various emetics and purgatives for several months, but he was unable to chivvy the animals out from their lair. In May 1648, when the medical men finally left her, Catharina, miraculously, again started vomiting amphibians, producing 13 toads and a flood of spawn within a couple of weeks.

The Toad-vomiting Woman endured her alleged unruly lodgers in the stomach for 14 more years, surviving all her medical attendants except Rheinesius, who visited her as late as 1661, being greatly astonished that she was still alive. After her death at the Altenburg hospital in 1662, the medical men were naturally eager to perform an autopsy, expecting to find an interesting vivarium of toads, lizards and salamanders within her body. To their disappointment and astonishment, not a single animal was found.

In 1694, the 12-year-old son of Pastor Zacharias Dödlerein, of the village of Berolzheim in southern Germany, was taken severely ill. After several apoplectic fits and attacks of abdominal cramps, he vomited numerous insects followed by 21 newts, four frogs and some toads. The clerics diagnosed possession by the Devil; what particularly impressed them was that when the suffering boy was led to take some fresh air near a pond with croaking frogs, his stomach-frogs croaked loudly in reply.

The medical men were dismissed from the case and the treatment of young Theodorus was taken over by exorcists. Their prayers, incantations and maledictions were initially of no avail; instead, the boy began vomiting even stranger objects –

GIVING THEM THE OLD HEAVE-HO


MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY

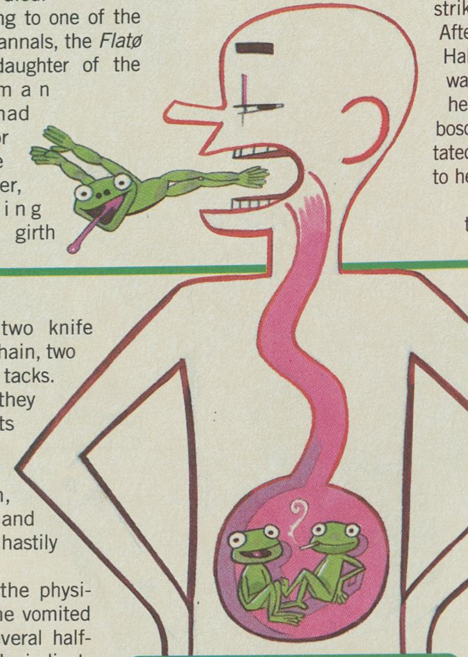
Stories of snakes and frogs in the human intestinal tract have existed in folklore for many years. A large arsenal of popular cures against these internal parasites existed and was frequently put to the test. Swedish haymakers always took a pinch of snuff before falling asleep in the fields, hoping that the snakes and the slowworms wouldn't negotiate such a formidable obstacle. In Scandinavian mythology, the stomach-frogs were much feared, since they were believed to grow to an enormous size; in a tale from Norway, the wretched patient could feel its claws closing in around her heart before she died.

According to one of the old Viking annals, the *Flatø Book*, a daughter of the nobleman Halldor had been ill for some time with a fever, increasing abdominal girth and an unquenchable thirst. The old women gossiped about her being pregnant, but the young lady denied this with great vehemence. Since her health was declining steadily, the King was consulted. His diagnosis was that she had accidentally swallowed the spawn of a serpent when she drank water and the reptile had grown inside her. He ordered that she was to thirst for several days without being given any water; after that, she was to be taken to a waterfall, and open her mouth so wide that the thirsty snake could hear the streaming water. When it slithered up her gullet and stretched its head out between the girl's jaws, her father was to strike it with his sword. After the King had left Halldor's house, this cure was performed exactly as he had prescribed; the bosom serpent was decapitated and the girl restored to health.

A miracle attributed to the two medical Saints Cosmas and Damien involved a peasant who was tortured day and night by a large snake which had crawled down his throat as he slept. No doctor could help him but, when he stepped into the Saints' church, the serpent slithered out of his throat with great haste.

This miracle is depicted on an early 14th century fresco in the Metropolitan cathedral in Mistra as well as on the Saints' reliquaries in Munich and Krakow.

One of the votive gifts to St Leonard of Lavantal was a small iron snake, given especially by people affected by diseases of the stomach.



white and red eggshells, two knife blades, one link from a large chain, two long nails and a lot of small tacks. Once, the clergymen thought they saw a large snake thrust its head out through the boy's mouth, but when the muscular Christians rushed forth, eager to "pull the Devil out and thrash the life out of him", it hastily withdrew.

In the meantime, one of the physicians had dissected one of the vomited "frogs from Hell". It had several half-digested insects in its stomach, indicating that the frog had been alive outside the boy's body shortly before it was 'vomited'. The boy's attendants countered that the frogs were supernatural and did not obey the ordinary laws of physiology. The clergymen experimented by pouring horses' urine – a time-honoured cure for animals in the stomach – on the remaining live frogs. They promptly died and it was unanimously decided to try this strong 'medicine' on poor Theodorus, who was forced to swallow several large bottles of urine. Under the influence of solemn prayers and incantations, this worked and Theodorus stopped vomiting frogs and other strange objects.

WHEN HE WAS LED TO A POND, HIS STOMACH FROGS CROAKED

During his journey to Lapland in 1732, Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) – credited with founding scientific natural history – was consulted in the case of a woman with three live frogs in her stomach. They could clearly be heard croaking, particularly in the springtime. Linnaeus advised her to use liquid tar as a medicine to expel the animals, but she preferred taking large doses of strong aquavit (a local spirit), which at least kept the animals happy and quiet. In his medical conclusions to the *Iter Lipponicum*, Linnaeus stated as a fact that frog spawn adhered to the membranes of the stomach, which hereafter "formed the nest, or rather the pond, for these dreadful animals, which tear and torture the poor patient".

In the late 18th century, the majority of leading biologists – including Linnaeus, the Comte de Buffon (1707–1788) and Johann Blumenbach (1752–1840) – were in favour of the concept that snakes and frogs could live as parasites in the human gastrointestinal tract. In 1780, Sir Joseph Banks (1744–1820) received a letter from the Rev. Samuel Glasse, describing how a certain Thomas Walker, after being given an emetic, had vomited a 2.5in (6.3cm) long live toad which crawled on the floor.

In 1834, Henriette Pfennig claimed to have vomited two live frogs after being troubled by stomach cramps and quacking noises from the midriff for more than a year. During the following weeks, she vomited nine more frogs before an admiring crowd of spectators, several of whom had travelled for miles to see this celebrity. Her doctor dissected one of the frogs and was greatly astonished to find several half-digested insects and an almost intact beetle in its stomach. The woman was forced to admit the hoax; after her neighbours had doubted that she really had frogs in her stomach, she had hidden the animals in the inside pockets of her skirt. In order to gain sympathy and public attention, she pretended to cough them up, with enough skill to trick everybody present, including the medical men.

The defenders of the bosom serpent soon rallied round a new case report, which was considered the most authenticated ever. The Russian court physician, Martin Wilhelm Mandt, had been consulted by a peasant who was certain that a snake had slithered through his mouth when he once slept out in the open. He had awoken with a jerk, feeling that something cold was moving around in his stomach and indeed movements could be felt in the epigastric area and a gurgling sound was heard with the stethoscope. After four days, Dr Mandt administered a strong purgative whereupon the man felt better and the movement in his stomach ceased. He went home to recuperate but returned triumphantly two days later, carrying a chamberpot containing the body of a 12in (30.5cm) adder.

Dr Mandt's case was widely published across Europe in translation and even went the rounds of the newspapers. Since it was illustrated with a figure of the snake, his article did much to re-establish the old fallacy. Dr Mandt noted that the reptile's backbone was broken at several sites and he believed that this had been caused by the powerful contractions of the bowel. This is unlikely – the broken back would rather hint that the snake had been killed on purpose. Furthermore, the snake's body would certainly have been more extensively digested if it had passed through the entire gastrointestinal system of a man.

In 1859, Professor Arnold Adolph Berthold of Göttingen published a monograph aimed at solving the burning question of the existence of living amphibians in the human stomach. He had noted that almost every German pathology museum of repute contained some snake, frog or newt which had allegedly been vomited by some patient after living for years within the human body. He obtained permission to dissect several of these specimens; they all had partially digested insects in their stomachs. It strongly suggested that the amphibians had been deliberately swallowed shortly before being vomited. These findings inspired a number of experiments whose results showed that none of these animals could survive in water heated to replicate the human interior and that frog spawn putrefied at this temperature.

AS A LAST RESORT, THEY PUT CHEESE ON HER TONGUE TO LURE THE FROG OUT

At a time when the bosom serpent had become a largely disregarded phenomenon in European medicine, it found new friends in the United States. In 1881, a Texas farmer vomited "a snake twenty-one and a quarter inches [54cm] long, of the prairie coach-whip variety". He threw it on the floor and his wife killed it. Another bizarre report described the case of a lady who had felt something moving in her stomach for four months. Ridiculed by her friends as a hysteric, she silenced them by vomiting a living, nearly full-grown mouse, which her doctor later kept in a glass jar in his office as a pet. As late as 1891, a credulous American practitioner described "a patient whose ailment is of a most unique character"; the farmer had brought up a living frog after 18 months of abdominal discomfort.

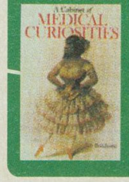
Early in 1916, a remarkable story appeared in several English newspapers. A woman had swallowed frog spawn, which had developed into a large frog, which lived and grew inside her. She was taken to Stroud Hospital (in Gloucestershire) but the doctors were unable to operate as the animal moved about too fast. As a last resort, the doctors put a piece of cheese on her tongue and the frog smelt it and struggled up her gullet to eat it. Tragically, the obese amphibian was too big to get through, and the poor woman choked to death.

The story of a 15-year-old Turkish girl with three long water snakes in her stomach was given credence by the *Daily Star* in 1979. It was claimed that they had persisted for five years after being accidentally imbibed as eggs. The *Daily Telegraph* went one worse in 1982 in the case of a 25-year-old Syrian woman. She was taken into hospital complaining of severe stomach pains, claiming that she had a 6ft (1.8m) snake lodged in her intestines. According to a Syrian paper, it made a sound like a chicken when hungry – loud enough to be heard by people standing nearby. Surgeons failed to remove the serpent and so the patient was sent to Spain, where a second operation also failed, despite an anæsthetic being used on the snake!

Yet another ludicrous account did the rounds of the newspapers in 1987. An 11-year-old girl in Baku had a 26in (66cm) "semi-poisonous Caucasian cat snake" in her stomach, which had slithered down her throat while she slept. Doctors managed to flush it out using a stomach pump. The *Scotsman* added a further frisson by declaring that the girl was still in hospital, being treated for the enraged reptile's bites in her stomach wall.

Although frogs in the stomach live on as a newspaper myth, they are no longer a problem in clinical medicine and, like other old, uncomplicated medical fallacies, the bosom serpent has gradually faded away.

This is an abbreviated and revised version of a longer chapter in the book *Cabinet of Medical Curiosities*, which also contains a list of references. It was published in the US by Cornell UP (ISBN 0–8014–3431–9) and in the UK by I B Tauris (ISBN 1–8606–4228–4).



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Fortean Times readers can buy copies of *Cabinet of Medical Curiosities* for the special price of £9.95 (inc p&p). See page 33 for order form.

NOT JUST A FROG IN THE THROAT?

There are, at least, 68 case reports in the medical literature of live reptiles or amphibians in the human gastrointestinal tract. They are evenly distributed over the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. More than 40 of them are from the German states, where many medical men remained firm advocates of the bosom serpent well into the 1840s. Seven cases were from France, four from Scandinavia and two from Great Britain. The five American cases are all from the latter part of the 19th century.

The animals involved include 17 snakes, 18 lizards, 12 toads and 15 frogs. Additionally, tales exist of two mice, two dogs, a cat, a mole and a hen as intestinal parasites.

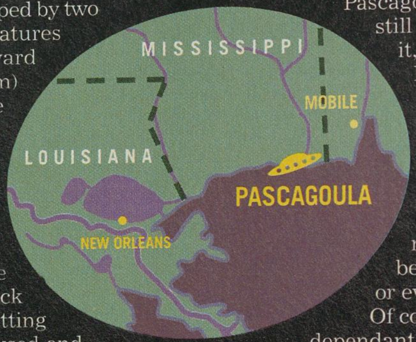
Some medical historians believe that large roundworms were misinterpreted as snakes by simple-minded people. Although this parasite is not exactly snake-like, it can be three or even four inches (8–10cm) long.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, individuals with some organic or psychosomatic gastrointestinal diseases were sometimes seized by the delusion that they had one or more living animals in their stomachs. This 'internal delusion of infestation' might sometimes progress so far that the patients pretended to vomit living or dead amphibians and presented them as evidence that their stomachs were full of such animals. Some of the 'frog-vomiters' were obvious frauds or hysterics; others were alcoholics who had chanced upon this clever way of convincing people that they needed strong liquor as a medicine to calm down their unruly passengers.

CLAW MEN FROM OUTER SPACE

ONE NIGHT IN 1973, WRINKLED CLAW-HANDED ALIENS TERRIFIED TWO FLORIDA FISHERMEN. STEVE SESSIONS RE-EXAMINES THIS CLASSIC AND MUCH-CITED CASE, SUGGESTING THAT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A FORM OF 'WAKING DREAM' RATHER THAN AN ACTUAL 'ABDUCTION'.

A fishing tale like no other – that was what Charlie Hickson and Calvin Parker told the officers in a Florida Sheriff's office on 11 October 1973. Obviously in shock, they recounted how, two catfish into their fishing trip, they had heard a humming sound and turned to see a large blue-grey saucer-shaped craft hovering above the ground nearby, topped by two flashing lights. Three creatures emerged and floated toward them. They were five feet (1.5m) tall, greyish, with elephantine skin and crab-like claws. Parker fainted immediately.



The creatures grabbed the fishermen and floated them into the spaceship. Hickson was levitated in a bright, circular room where an eye-like device moved back and forth across his body emitting bright flashes. He was paralysed and could only watch as the beings hovered around him, humming.

Twenty minutes later, the men found themselves on the dilapidated pier, on the west bank of the East Pascagoula River. Stunned, they sat in Hickson's car for a while, drinking whiskey and debating what had occurred. They tried to phone the Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, but were rebuffed. The *Mississippi Press Register* office was closed, so they drove to the Jackson County Sheriff's office. "I thought they was lyin' at first," said Deputy Glenn Ryder, "but you could tell the boy was scared half to death. He was shaking like a sack of shucks and whining and jabbering to Jesus all the time."

A quarter century has passed since the Pascagoula incident, but one can still feel its resonance. Without it, would the Betty and Barney Hill case have become the TV movie *The UFO Incident*? Would Travis Walton claim to have been abducted just two weeks after it aired? Would *Close Encounters* have been made? Would there have been *Intruders* or *Communion* or even *The X-Files*?

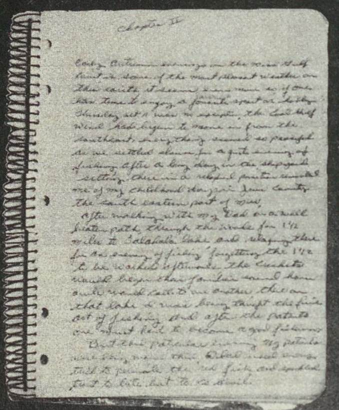
Of course the incident was just as dependant on what came before it, building and feeding upon popular culture and the atmosphere of the time. Ufologists now readily admit that it occurred at the crest of the 1973 UFO flap, which took place against the background of Watergate and Vice President Agnew's resignation. Under other, saner, conditions, the claims of the two fishermen would have ,been

MAIN ILLUSTRATION BY ALEXANDER TOMLINSON

RUMOURS SPREAD THAT CLAW MEN WERE RAPING AND MURDERING LOCALS

immediately dismissed. But at the time – and especially to those situated on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, who saw the reports of sightings moving inexorably nearer – a close encounter of the third kind was ready to be accepted with little scepticism. It was simply a matter of when, where, and to whom...

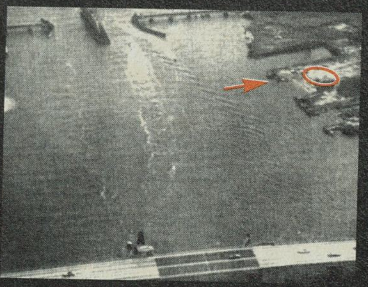
Charles Hickson, 45, and 18-year-old Calvin Parker, the son of a friend, often went fishing at the pier. Once part of the marine docks of the Army Corps of Engineers, where dredges and tugboats were repaired, by 1973 it has become the deserted Shaupeter Shipyard, not far from F B Walker and Sons, where Hickson worked as a shipfitter. Parker was living with the Hicksons in Gautier, and Hickson had obtained employment for him at Walker.

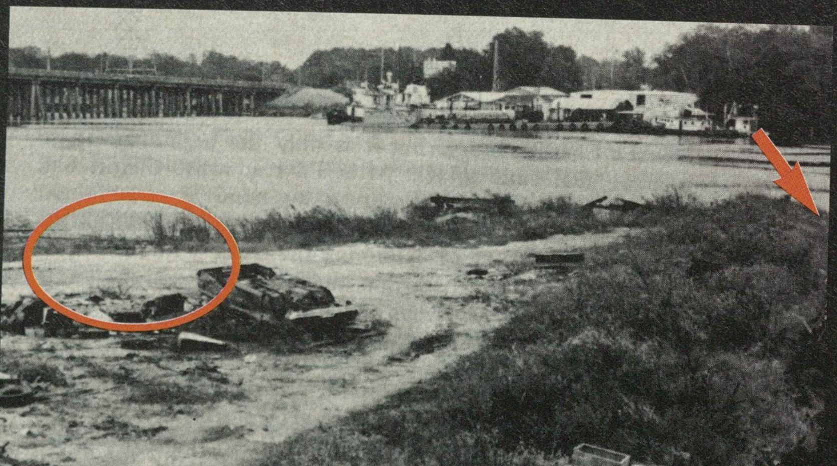


The morning after the incident, wind of it reached Murphy Givens, a reporter for the *Mississippi Press Register*. He did some investigating and found that the 'landing site' was in direct view of the railroad bridge and the drawbridge on Highway 90, Givens interviewed the booth attendants on each. They had seen nothing out of the ordinary. Nor did security cameras trained on the river at Ingalls Shipyards.

Yet the sheriff's people were convinced by the two men's story, Givens told *Rolling Stone*'s Joe Eszterhas later, "so I wrote the story straight. If it was a hoax, OK, it'd come out." The story broke the following Friday with the headline: "While Fishing... Men Forced Aboard UFO Here."

Further corroboration of the men's veracity seemed to come when Sheriff Fred Diamond put them in a room with a concealed tape recorder. "They didn't know they were on tape," said Chief Deputy Barney Mathis, "and it didn't indicate a hoax or anything like that. If you heard this tape you would believe they saw something... They were on the point of a heart attack almost."





TIM WILSON/CHARLES HICKSON/WILLIAM MENDEZ

SITE FOR SORE EYES: At the abduction site (above) – and viewed from the air clearly showing the drawbridge (top) – the arrow marks the pier's location and the oval represents the hovering ship. Hickson recorded the details in his handwritten manuscript for his book *UFO Contact at Pascagoula* (above right).

The *Biloxi-Gulfport Daily Herald* concurred, headlining their report of examinations at the Keesler USAF Medical Center examination: "UFO captives physically sound according to Keesler medics." *Newsweek*, on the other hand, suggested the incident was a hoax, stating the story had "as much moonshine as stardust" to it.

The Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) – then one of the leading US UFO investigating bodies – promptly dispatched Dr James A Harder, professor of civil engineering at the University of California at Berkeley. He arrived there at the same time as Dr J Allen Hynek, chairman of the Astronomy Department at Northwestern University in Illinois, and principal scientific consultant to the USAF's Project Blue Book.

Hynek was fast becoming the major voice in the pro-UFO movement, having just founded the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS). His first book, *The UFO Experience* – which featured his famous categorisation of close encounters – was published the previous year. In it, Hynek treated the third kind of close encounter with caution. "When I first heard of such episodes, my own natural prejudices told me to throw them out," said Hynek in 1976. "My thinking was altered completely when I was called... to interrogate two Mississippi fishermen... The tale told by these two rugged shipyard workers held up under gruelling cross-examination."

The examination had taken place in the Walker shipyard offices. As in the Hill case, regressive hypnosis was used, Harder being a part-time hypnotist. Wrote Hickson later: "I relaxed myself on the couch and shortly, with Dr Harder's suggestions, I was in a state of the most happy and relaxed feeling I have ever had. But as we approached Thursday night, I became terrified. I was back there with the craft landing and those things coming out."

Harder – who introduced himself by telling Hickson and Parker they were among a small handful of people who had had similar experiences – appeared to believe the story from the beginning. "There was definitely something here that was not terrestrial," Harder later told the press about the terrifying 'Claw Men'. "Where they come from and why they were here is a matter of conjecture, but the fact that they are here is true, beyond a reasonable doubt."

A more pragmatic approach was adopted by lawyer Joe Colingo, who later claimed to represent Hickson and Parker. "I figured we had to authenticate it somehow if we were going to make the million dollars," he told Eszterhas. Colingo didn't put much stock in the ufologists, but said they appeared "pretty damn official to the public."

He was right. UFO panic on the Coast promptly swelled: within weeks flying saucers were reported hovering over an oil rig in the Gulf, over the Back Bay of Biloxi and from Ocean Springs (where a Baptist preacher condemned the aliens as Satan's minions).

Rumours also spread that Claw Men were raping and murdering locals and the police were hiding the bodies to prevent a panic. Not surprisingly, there was a run on firearms in Pascagoula; the UFO-fearful had even fired at an Air Force helicopter in George County.

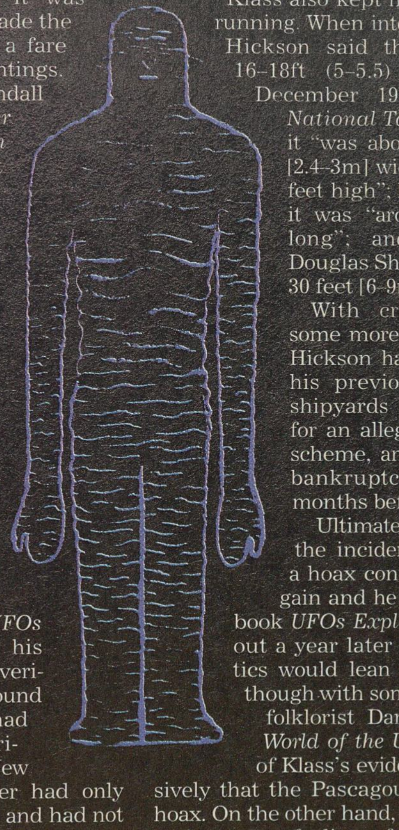
The Civil Defence Auxiliary held a special meeting, as did the Veterans of Foreign Wars and police stations all along the coast were getting desperate calls. The Pascagoula police alone received some 100, UFO-related, calls in a two-hour span. "The federal government's got a responsibility to help us with this hysteria," said Sheriff Diamond, who promised to take it all the way to President Nixon.

Five days after the Hickson-Parker incident, a Long Beach cab driver announced he had been driving west on US90 in Biloxi when a UFO approached from the Mississippi Sound and landed in front of his taxi. Then an alien with bulging eyes pecked on his window with a "crawfish-pawed" hand and he too fainted.

It was reported in striking detail in the press; yet, two days later, it was revealed that the cabby had made the entire thing up after he and a fare had discussed the rash of sightings. (Sadly some books – like E Randall Floyd's *Ghost Lights and Other Encounters With the Unknown* (1993) still report this incident as fact.)

The flap lost its steam when Nixon fired everyone who defied his orders to dismiss the Watergate Special Prosecutor. Things settled; priorities and interests shifted.

As a coda, however, Hickson was given a polygraph test at Colingo's office and, according to the operator, Hickson "believes he was on a spaceship." The headline in the *Daily Herald* proclaimed "Polygraph test verifies UFO story."



CHARLES HICKSON/WILLIAM MENDEZ

Enter sceptic Philip J Klass, author of *UFOs Identified*. Centring his investigation on the 'verifying' polygraph, he found Hickson's attorney had chosen an inexperienced operator from New Orleans. The examiner had only been in practice a year and had not been certified by his training school. In fact, he had failed to complete his intern training.

Further, the testing had only taken 20 minutes and apparently after only five minutes the operator was heard to say, "Hell, they're telling the truth!"

Since the effectiveness of the polygraph relies primarily on the experience and technique of the operator, this cast doubt on the result. (Klass offered to pay for new polygraph tests by an independent and experienced operator but was refused.)

TIM WILSON/CHARLES HICKSON/WILLIAM MENDEZ

DRAWING TO CONCLUSIONS: Investigators Harder (left) and Hynek (right) were on the scene within 36 hours of the incident. While under hypnosis, Hickson described his abductors. Artist Curtis Watkins used this description to draw the creature (below left) and to model it in clay (below right).

Later still, Hickson agreed to speak at a UFO conference at Fort Smith, Arkansas, on the condition he take a new polygraph test by a police officer who had certification and experience. (Hickson backed out after he had been flown in at their expense.)

Klass also kept his adding machine running. When interviewed by APRO, Hickson said the spacecraft was 16–18ft (5–5.5) wide; in the 2 December 1973 issue of *The National Tattler*, Hickson said it "was about eight to 10 feet [2.4–3m] wide and about eight feet high"; he told Dick Cavett it was "around 20 foot [6m] long"; and on The Mike Douglas Show, it grew to "20 or 30 feet [6–9m] long."

With credibility waning, some more checking revealed Hickson had been fired from his previous job at Ingalls shipyards the previous year for an alleged money-making scheme, and he had filed for bankruptcy a mere three months before the abduction.

Ultimately, Klass concluded, the incident was most likely a hoax contrived for financial gain and he said as such in his book *UFOs Explained*, which came out a year later (1974). Other sceptics would lean on his conclusion, though with some reservation; said folklorist Daniel Cohen in *The World of the UFOs* (1978): "None of Klass's evidence proves conclusively that the Pascagoula incident was a hoax. On the other hand, it doesn't leave you with a great feeling of confidence that it wasn't, either."

There again, UFO-buffs Ralph and Judy Blum's *Beyond Earth: Man's Contact with UFOs* (1974), gave the Pascagoula matter a large chunk of credulous space. Most errors in subsequent pro-UFO books can be traced back to the Blums and to David M Jacobs' 1975 book *The UFO Controversy in America*.

AN ALIEN WITH BULGING EYES PECKED ON HIS WINDOW

"THEY WERE ON THE POINT OF A HEART ATTACK"

As many pro-ufologists declare that Hickson and Parker passed their polygraph tests, it should be noted that Parker never took one, succumbing to "the flu" just before the testing. Actually he had a relapse of a pre-existing "nervous condition" and moved back in with his family in Laurel, Mississippi. (Though some might consider this a convenient dodge, Colingo felt it might work in their favour. "If Hickson gets on the Cavett Show and says Parker had a nervous breakdown because of what happened to 'em, there's gonna be all this sympathy.")

So what really happened? Much of the dichotomy over the last 25 years is due to Klass' ruling. While the evidence does not support an actual UFO abduction, the evidence to support a hoax is also lacking. Perhaps Hickson's bankruptcy and character, while suspicious, were given too much weight: who's to say that bankrupt fishermen cannot be abducted by aliens, if such were an actual phenomenon.

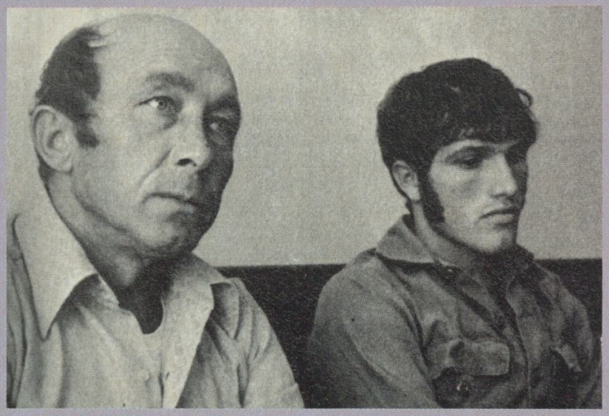
Klass seemed to consider the pressures of bankruptcy as a prime motive for a money-making scheme, apparently overlooking the possibility that the same stress could produce an extremely volatile psychological state.

But to Klass, the main indication of a hoax was Hickson's alacrity in hiring a lawyer and trying to sell his story. This simply wasn't the case. It was Colingo who attached himself to the two abductees, not the other way around. Further, Colingo was quoted by Eszterhas as saying, "I don't believe in their gawddamn Claw Men, but there's a lot of money involved." Though it may have become a hoax, I don't think it started that way.

Also, Klass completely overlooks the tape made at the Jackson County jail. Kept from the media at the time, a transcript of the secret tape finally surfaced in the book Hickson wrote with William Mendez 10 years later, *UFO Contact at Pascagoula*.

> "This evening I like to had a heart attack tonight," Parker is heard to say.
>
> "I know, it scares me to death too, son," replied Hickson.
>
> Said Parker, "What's so damn bad about it, won't nobody believe it!"
>
> "I knew all along they was – they was people from outer worlds up there. I knew all along," replied Hickson.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?


TIM WILSON/CHARLES HICKSON/WILLIAM MENDEZ

LIVING TO TELL THE TALE: Hickson (left) and Parker (right) after their experience.

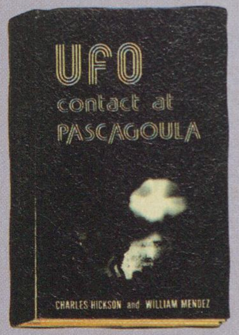
In the years that followed the 'incident', Calvin Parker continued to suffer from his "nervous condition," experiencing further breakdowns. He was discharged from the Marines and moved from job to job.

Jerome Clark notes that Parker "moved to Louisiana and stayed away from reporters and investigators, though Mendez managed to win his trust." (*UFO Encyclopedia*, 2nd edition, 'Pascagoula'.) With the exception of submitting to hypnosis for William Mendez, Parker successfully disappeared into normalcy.

The only other glimpse of the reclusive Parker came in 1993, when Jim Greenen, of the International UFO Center in Orlando, Florida, reported on the Internet that Parker had surfaced and was writing his own book with a news broadcaster called Bill Roberson. [*FT* failed to find any record of such a book being published.]

Greenen also reported that Parker had agreed to be videotaped while under hypnosis for the abduction researcher Budd Hopkins. According to Greenen, while 'under', Parker angrily describes how he grabbed a female alien (apparently different physiologically to the Claw Men) "by the ears and bashed her head against the wall until black substance came out of her eyes and ears." [*FT* would like to hear from anyone who can confirm the existence of this tape and its whereabouts.]

Charles Hickson, however, remained in the spotlight, appearing to enjoy visiting local schools to retell his adventure and appearing at UFO conferences alongside other 'abductees' and, in 1983 writing his account, with William Mendez, in *UFO Contact at Pascagoula*.

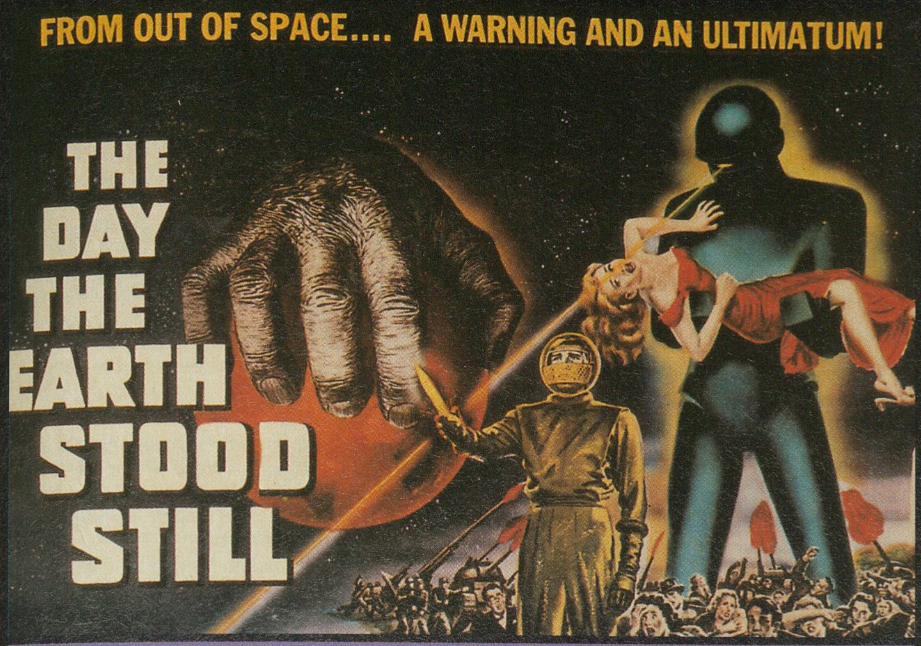


As Hickson underwent months of hypnotic regression, his 20-minute experience expanded to around an hour and a half, seemingly to account for all he was 'remembering'. The humming creatures became "robots, maybe controlled from another spaceship". Eventually, they spoke to him.

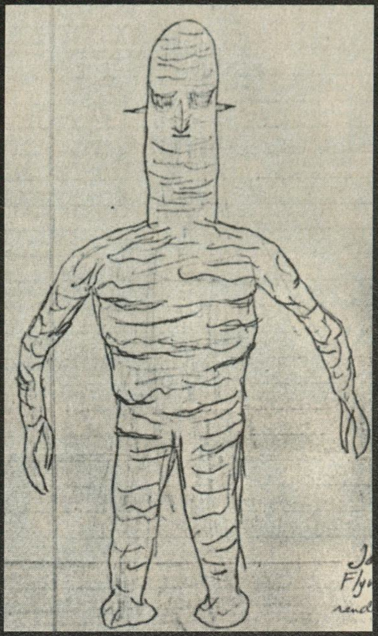
In January 1974, Hickson claimed to have seen the spaceship again while hunting squirrels. As it hovered in a clearing he received, telepathically, the first of many messages: "We mean you no harm... You have endured. You have been chosen."

Hickson was moved to make predictions. Since 1974, has he regularly announced that proof of the government's knowledge of UFOs was imminent; but in 1982 he went even further, proclaiming that aliens would alter our aggressive thoughts, preparing us for their visit in 1983. "We're going to see something I can't even comprehend," he told reporters. He also said he was one of 12 people who will serve as liaisons between the aliens and people on Earth. He had been in a touch with some of these 12 apostles, but not all had been chosen yet. (Parker was not one of them.) In 1988, he announced again the alien's presence would be known in two years and "there won't be any doubt." And so on.

Retired now, Hickson continues to tell his story. In a recent interview, he says he still believes the government is preparing mankind for alien contact.


FROM OUT OF SPACE.... A WARNING AND AN ULTIMATUM!
THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
THE KOBAL COLLECTION

CREATURE FEATURE: Was Hickson's description of his abductors influenced by *The Day the Earth Stood Still*'s robot who carried humans aboard his ship (above) and *This Island Earth*'s grotesque creatures from Metaluna (below)?

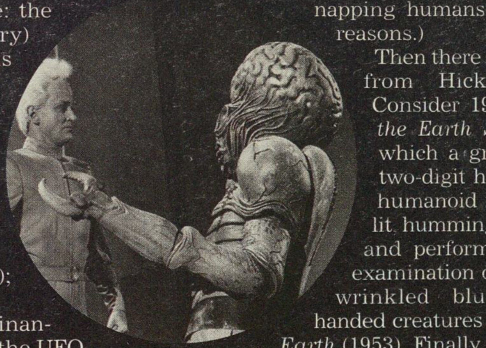

CHARLES HICKSON/WILLIAM MENDEZ

PICTURE IMPERFECT: Shipyard foreman Jim Flynt drew his impression of the aliens.

If Hickson and Parker were indeed unaware that they were being overheard, it suggests sincere belief. Indeed, despite later plans to open a UFO tourist shop on the 'landing site' and other similar plans, Hickson has acted much less like a hoaxer than a religious convert, while Parker appears as someone who was caught up in a *folie à deux*.

In this view, the entire abduction claim begins and ends with Charles Hickson and it becomes easier to identify the possible source of the entire event as a type of "night terror" experienced by Hickson alone, his fright and sincere belief conveyed to the young and impressionable Parker.

Many elements are clear indicators of such an experience: the eidetic (detailed sensory) imagery; sleep paralysis ("All I could do was blink my eyes"); the feeling of floating out of one's body ("It was like I was weightless"); the brightly illuminated circular room ("The room didn't have no corners or edges or nothing... It was real light inside"); and the humming sounds.


THE KOBAL COLLECTION

Could the stress of his financial plight, combined with the UFO flap going on at the time, have provoked Hickson to have a hypnagogic (waking-dream) hallucination? It seems likely – even more so to us who have been privy to Hickson's continued behaviour. It's all suggestive of the 'fantasy-prone' personality type (easily hypnotised, claims messages from entities, frequent realistic hallucinations while awake).

We know now, however, that when asked to recall a past event, some subjects can and do fantasise freely (whether hypnotised or not), creating convincing memories of things that never actually happened. More importantly, if the hypnotist has beliefs about what actually transpired, it is difficult for him to refrain from subtly guiding the recall.

Many ufologists have argued that Hickson's lack of interest in UFOs prior to his experience precludes him from 'making up' such a story, but there were ample stimuli around for a UFO-related waking-dream. In addition to those already mentioned, Donald Keyhoe's *Aliens from Space* and John Wallace Spencer's *Limbo of the Lost*, which claimed UFOs had kidnapped ships and planes, had both come out that year. Further, *Star Trek* had just become a cult hit and the British series *UFO* had just entered into American syndication on CBS. (*UFO* featured aliens arriving in craft similar to Hickson's and kidnapping humans for unknown reasons.)

Then there are the movies from Hickson's youth. Consider 1951's *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, in which a grey robot with two-digit hands carried a humanoid into a brightly lit, humming, circular craft and performed a medical examination on him. Or the wrinkled blue-grey claw-handed creatures in *This Island Earth* (1953). Finally – and perhaps most interesting, considering that all those who came to Pascagoula that October to 'investigate' the incident seemed to overlook it – the ABC Movie of the Week the night before the alleged abduction was *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*, a thriller about demonic creatures who abduct a housewife.

We may never know what really happened that October night on the banks of the Pascagoula River. We do know, however, that the Pascagoula incident is an important locus in the history of ufology, halfway between Kenneth Arnold's 1947 sighting of things that skipped like flying saucers and a tidy collection of people wearing purple-shrouds and Nikes, waiting to be carried off by a UFO. ⓕ

TODAY HICKSON APPEARS LESS LIKE A HOAXER THAN A RELIGIOUS CONVERT

NAKED CITY

EXACTLY 100 YEARS AGO, IN JANUARY 1899, A PACIFIST RELIGIOUS GROUP FLEEING PERSECUTION IN RUSSIA, EMIGRATED TO CANADA. ALMOST FORTEAN IN THEIR REJECTION OF ANY KIND OF AUTHORITY, THEY PROVED A THORN IN THE SIDE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT. HERE AUTHOR IAN MORFITT EXPOSES THE DOUKHOBORS.

One hundred years ago this January, 8,000 Doukhobors from the port of Batum on the Black Sea settled in Canada in pursuit of a higher level of spiritual life. As they disembarked from the immigrant ship *SS Lake Huron*, each one hoped this was the Promised Land.

But the transition for this rural, pre-industrial Russian Christian sect was not easy; their concepts of pacifism, animal rights and anti-materialism split the Doukhobor community into three factions. The most active of these was the 'Sons of Freedom', whose millennial zeal manifested itself in now-legendary nude marches and acts of violence that ran counter to their fundamental tenet of non-violence.

TWISTED FIRESTARTERS: In 1962, members of the Sons of Freedom were involved in 274 burnings and terrorist acts.

GEORGE DIACK/THE VANCOUVER SUN

The need for strong spiritual leadership existed from the sect's earliest days in Russia. Leaders who had visions or who received 'visitations' emerged according to an hereditary principle. The most influential of all was Peter Vasilievitch Verigin – known as Peter the Lordly – in the late 19th century.

Verigin's influence held them together when, in an attempt to force them to submit to Tsarist state control, the Doukhobors were exiled to Siberia. It was under his direction that the Doukhobors destroyed their arms in huge bonfires in a mass refusal to serve in the military in 1895.

Corresponding with Leo Tolstoy – whose admiration of Doukhobor ideals prompted him to become their greatest champion – Verigin saw the need to find a land where his people could live uncontaminated by a violent, selfish and materialistic society.

Verigin wrote that an earthly paradise was only possible by a return to "primitive conditions... and a spiritual stature lost by Adam and Eve." Labour would be only in Christ's service, currency returned to the Cæsars that devised them, animals freed from enslavement. Metal objects were to be rejected because mining "tortured" people to obtain ore and food could be raised in abundance by solar heat. A new exodus was required to a land closer to the sun and closer to God.

Although some of Verigin's phraseology sounds like half-baked religious philosophy, he was simply rejecting what he saw as the greedy exploitation of man and nature. He longed for a world without violence, where food was plentiful and neither man nor beast would suffer. "Plenty of corn exists, if only avarice were diminished," he wrote. "The Earth freed from the violence of human hands would abound with all that is ordained for it." Ironically, a century on, this view is gaining more and more currency in western cultures.

A large segment – known as the 'Independents' – had already turned away from the communal Doukhobor lifestyle to run their farms on an individual basis. The first serious fracturing of the community was inspired, unwittingly, by the writings of Peter the Lordly himself, which were never intended to be read by his largely illiterate followers.

Embracing Verigin's slogan "the sons of God shall never be the slaves of corruption", a religious fervour took hold of another group. Releasing their livestock into the woods, the zealots hitched themselves to wagons when taking their produce to market. When hundreds marched barefoot and singing to preach to the unconverted, they burned leather and fur in ritual bonfires and discarded metal tools.

EVEN IN SUCH COLD, NOT ONE OF THE NAKED WAS FROZEN

When Verigin arrived in Canada in 1903, the radicals were disappointed by his lack of commitment to their cause. In renewed zeal, they called themselves *Svobodniki* (Freedomites) or the Sons of Freedom (SOF). Inspired by Verigin's writings, they again took to the road to preach, only this time they marched in the nude, "in the manner of the first Adam and Eve".

On their way to "destroy the throne of Satan", the group chanced upon Verigin himself and forcibly freed the horse from his trap. But their march was intercepted by nearby villagers. Beaten and bleeding, they huddled together overnight exposed to the elements. Later, one recalled with amazement: "We remained naked and it was really wonderful to us that in such a wind we were not frozen. Those who stood guard over us publicly announced that the cold that came on was a very great cold, but not one of the naked was frozen."

Marching on toward Yorkton, Saskatchewan, clothed but eating grass and leaves like their fellow animals, the SOF stripped before entering town. They were arrested and convicted of indecent exposure. Refusing to be bound over to keep the peace, they served jail terms before being returned to their home villages.

The peace was not to last long. Nakedness was a step closer to holiness, but there were other impediments to holy life, including technology. Zealots destroyed a wheatfield with a roller, and the purifying powers of fire were applied to farm machinery.

The next march saw the SOF in long blue gowns and wide-brimmed straw hats chanting and denouncing the impure life and the moderate Peter the Lordly. They rented a house in Fort William for a New Year's parade and marched naked through its snow-covered streets. Rounded up by police, they were taken back to the house where they sat naked on the floor around communal piles of fruit and nuts. A ceremonial burning of clothes in spring and more nude walkabouts resulted in further arrests and prison terms.

THEY FUELLED THE ARSON ATTACK WITH THEIR OWN CLOTHES

The communal life of the Doukhobors in Saskatchewan was brought to an end by the departure of the 'Independents' and government pressure to register their land. Having resolutely refused to acknowledge authority in any form since arriving in Canada – including sending their children to school and registering births, marriages and homestead property rights – the Doukhobors were officially dispossessed of their lands.

Peter the Lordly, lured by the promise of the lush fruit-growing valleys of British Columbia, used communal funds to purchase land where his people could relocate. The first prairie community, largely comprising Orthodox Doukhobors who still recognised the hereditary leadership of Verigin, were joined by the SOF.

Despite this new beginning, the SOF continued their nude marches – once acts of faith but increasingly becoming acts of protest. In 1922, under pressure from local authorities to educate their children and adhere to laws, the SOF burned nine schools to the ground.

In an attempt to liberate him from the contamination of material goods, Verigin's own home was put to the torch as the SOF fuelled the fire with their own clothes.

Peter the Lordly paid the ultimate price for his regular denunciations of the SOF when a train he was travelling in was dynamited in 1926. His death marked the first usage of this new form of protest.

After much jockeying for position by heirs apparent, the mantle of leadership was assumed by his grandson, Peter Petrovich Verigin. In aiming to unite Independent, Orthodox and SOF Doukhobors, his attempts to drive out the divisive forces earned him the title of Peter the Purger.

The Depression put paid to the promise of a better life for the Doukhobor community as repossession of property left them landless yet again. Frustration and increasing interference by authorities led once more to mass nude demonstrations.

Stripping, singing and the torching of public and Doukhobor-owned buildings demonstrated their renunciation of the ways of the outside world. Pacifism gave way to other forms of protest called "black work", lauded by many SOF.

The greatest of Doukhobor taboos – violence – had become, paradoxically, a method to purge threatening influences.

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BILL CUNNINGHAM/THE PROVINCE

ONE FOR THE MOUNTIE: RCMP officers arrest Doukhobor women protesters in September 1953.

Their belief that schools were a primary contaminating influence led to an escalation of school burnings. "The cause of all this is the school with its wrong orientation, thrusting sadism upon the youthful generation," a SOF manifesto claimed. "Especially when a person partakes of higher education, or attends military academies, does he become a truly insane animal."

Nude parents trying to physically remove their children from government schools were arrested and imprisoned. New schools, built to replace those destroyed, met the same fate within months of opening. Hundreds now joined the nude parades.

After the death of Peter the Purger and his unifying leadership, various leaders attempted to fill the vacuum. His son, John Verigin, was seen as too moderate for many SOF. Some turned to Louis Popoff – the self-styled 'Tsar of Heaven', known for his tendency to

DOUKHOBORS' BARE NECESSITIES

THE VANCOUVER SUN

The origins of the illiterate Russian peasants who came to be known as the Doukhobors has sometimes been traced to the *Raskol* (Great Schism) in the Russian Orthodox Church, provoked by Patriarch Nikon in 1654. But the Doukhobor faith and lifestyle was so far removed that it seems unlikely that it can be taken as a basis for its evolution.

A crackdown on religious heretics in 1785 by Archbishop Ambrosius led him to refer derisively to one group as "Doukho-bortsi" (Spirit-wrestlers), wrestling against the Holy Spirit. They embraced the term, turning its intended meaning on its end and proclaiming that they wrestled with the Spirit of God which dwelled within them.

The faith of the dissenters was as much concerned with the rejection of extraneous spiritual baggage as it was with new philosophies. Doukhobors felt there was no need for priests to come between God and an individual and rejected churches as house of worship, the liturgy, icons, fasts and festivals, the concepts of redemption, heaven and hell, and the primacy of the Bible. They refused to yield to theocratic authority and, later, any authority.

Worship was confined to the sobraniye (gathering) where the faithful bowed to each other in recognition of the Divinity within. The loaf of bread, jug of water and cellar of salt placed on a table in the middle of a room represented the basic requirements of non-spiritual life, and hymns and psalms from the orally transmitted *Book of Life* were sung or recited.

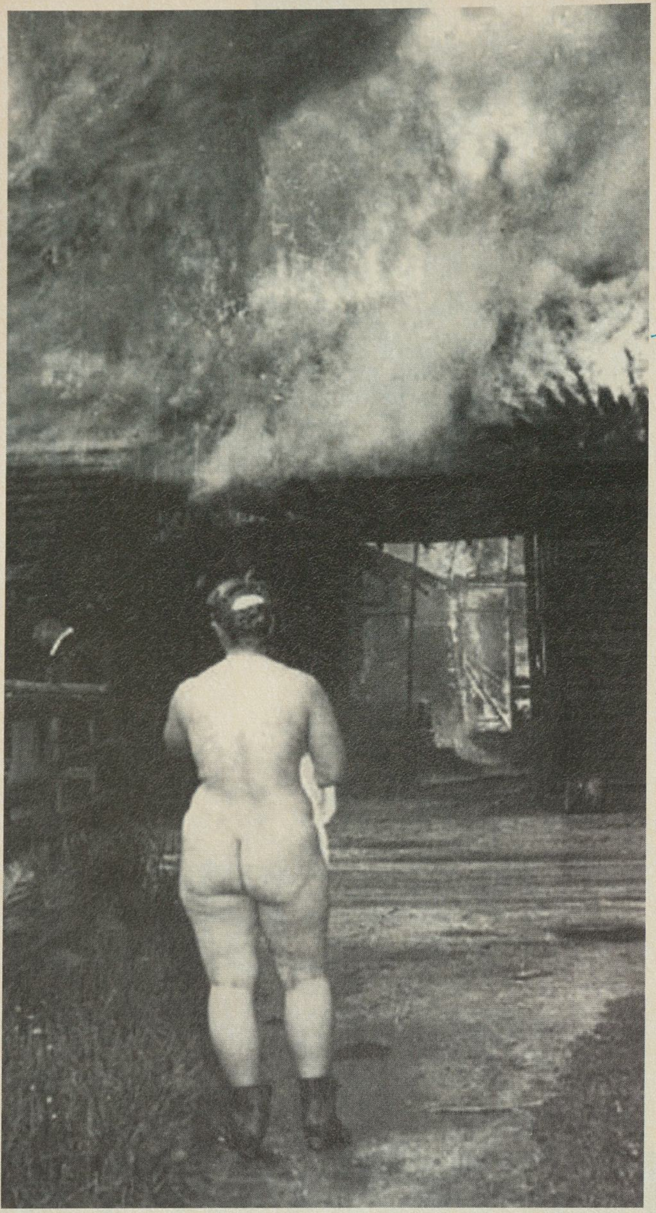
A constant stream of often brutal persecution earned the sympathy and support of British Quakers and Tolstoy who, lauding their spiritual purity, raised funds to enable the Doukhobors to emigrate to a land where they could live unmolested according to their beliefs.

After the failure of a settlement on Cyprus attention was turned to Canada, whose government was actively seeking to settle the prairies. The Doukhobors arrived in Canada with a special exemption from military service and the homestead law that required plots be worked and lived on individually.

Villages were built and the land was worked on a communal basis. Those who rejected the hereditary leadership and turned away from communal village life to work their own farms formed the Independent Doukhobors.

Orthodox Doukhobors, now known as the Union of Spiritual Communities in Christ, later assimilated into Canadian life, remaining committed to the ideals of non-violence (emphasised in their slogan of 'Toil and peaceful life'), the 'Law of God' (consisting of the commandments to love God and love thy neighbour as thyself), and a celebration of their Russian heritage.

Further reading: Aylmer Maude, *A Peculiar People: The Doukhobors* (1904). Harry B Hawthorn, *The Doukhobors of British Columbia* (1955). George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (1968).



GEORGE DIACK/THE PROVINCE

BURN, BABY, BURN: The protests of 1962 marked the end of the divisions in the Dukhobor community and some of the more extreme "religious" practices.

BILL CUNNINGHAM/THE PROVINCE

CARRIED AWAY: A hunger-striking Doukhobor is carried into court by RCMP officers in 1953.

stride about in white robes and a crown of ripe oranges.

John Lebedoff – respected in the hereditary tradition as a descendant of the first man to refuse military service in Russia in 1893 – also commanded a following. Michael Orekoff presented his credentials as a distant cousin of Peter the Lordly who had been visited by the Archangel Michael, and soon adopted the moniker of Michael the Archangel himself.

The government increased the indecent exposure penalty from six months to three years and conducted further mass trials, but this served only to increase the frequency and numbers involved in nude protests. By May 1932 over 700 were incarcerated in a newly-built detention camp surrounded by 20ft (6m) high barbed wire fences on a deserted island off the mainland coast of British Columbia.

The SOF were undeterred; in the following two years there were a further 153 acts of arson. As dynamitings and burnings of homes continued apace in the British Columbia interior, a government commission attempted to unravel the workings of destructive members of the community.

Inevitably, a confession from one SOF member soon triggered a flurry of other confessions, accusations and counter-accusations that lasted into the Fifties.

Starved for strong leadership, much of the community turned to the exotic Stefan Sorokin who, like a latter-day Pied Piper, arrived in 1950 strumming his homemade harp and singing psalms he learned from Independent Doukhobors in Saskatchewan. A non-Doukhobor, he had escaped his native Russia and wandered for over 20 years, during which time he joined the Plymouth Brethren, Lutherans and Seventh Day Adventists.

During his short time in the community he toured settlements promoting an end to the "black work" and negotiated the release of 400 arsonists from prison. Stressing the need to find a new Promised Land, he took freely donated money for the search and settled on Uruguay.

Of the approximately 2,500 SOF Doukhobors, it was estimated that only 800 were involved in any real controversy and a mere 200 in the more violent practices.

When the government, determined to find a lasting solution, made minor concessions to Doukhobor lifestyle, Sorokin encouraged his followers to drop their more controversial practices. While most of the SOF agreed, the most radical and fundamental believers waged the last and most violent campaign in 1962 involving 274 burnings and terrorist acts.

FIRE BECAME ITS OWN END – A PASSION THAT EXCITED SOME TO ORGASM

Train tracks and a massive electrical power pylon joined the list of targets of the SOF, who continued to torch their own and their neighbour's homes. Despite the attacks over decades, death was never the intent and rarely occurred. The curious combination of nudity and burnings were always the preferred means of resisting outside influence.

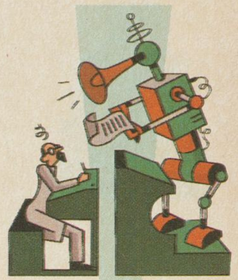
In their study of the Doukhobors, George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic described the effect: "The exciting break of fire as a kerosene-soaked house burst into flame, [and] the deep thud of exploding dynamite, carried an irresistible excitement. Fire had become its own end, a passion that excited some of the arsonists to the point of orgasm."

In all the manifestations of protest and religious mania, it is difficult to envisage one more bizarre than ranks of nude arsonists ejaculating into the night air as the flames leap higher and higher to the glory of God.

The community as a whole remained scarred for years after. Despite the fact that less than a tenth of the SOF were ever involved in the most extreme activities, the bulk of the SOF and the Orthodox and Independent Doukhobors were, and would continue to be, identified by outsiders as members of the same faction.

By 1962, the difficulties of assimilating into a foreign culture while steadfastly holding to fundamental beliefs had run their course. The ingrained distrust of authority, bred by a fear of persecution, was finally overcome by the necessity of having to confront the outside world. Ironically it was education that defeated the old ignorance that promoted a slavish adherence to pseudo-religious acts of faith.

Today the Doukhobors continue to espouse their philosophy of non-violence and now maintain links with similar groups throughout the world. On a website home page, a single sentence refers to the extremism of a few past Doukhobor factions. It is no wonder they wish to forget their most troubled time.



JUST THE FACTS

CHECKS AND BALANCES

Why does no-one seem to check their sources thoroughly anymore? NICK WARREN laments the sometimes circular nature of paranormal research.

One of the most irritating features of fortean studies is the tendency for the same material to be copied from book to book, or periodical to periodical, without any of the authors troubling themselves to check on the citation's origins. Now that so many branches of this endeavour like to accord themselves the status of 'sciences' (ufology, cryptozoology, cereology ...) this tendency is becoming nothing short of scandalous. Whenever the exercise is actually undertaken, it often happens that the 'mystery' mysteriously disappears.

For example, Paul Begg, in his pioneering book *Into Thin Air* (1979), made a critical reappraisal of classic cases of vanishing people, or groups of people. While the book is now hard to come by, much of Begg's research has been used in anthologies and part-works such as *The Unexplained.* Among the better-known tales dealt with are those of David Lang (who vanished from a farm in Tennessee on 23 September 1880), the disappearance of a large contingent of the Norfolk Regiment at Gallipoli during the First World War, and the alleged teleportation of an entire warship in the 'Philadelphia Experiment'. What Begg found in many of these stories amounted to an ominous circularity of references when trying to uncover the ultimate source, details that were not sustained by surviving records and references to individuals and publications which seem never to have existed.

ED TRAQUINO

Even some very well-known fortean mysteries appear to be built on sand. The whole Loch Ness industry derives from a couple of 1930s photographs, now revealed as fakes; an inconsequential legend about a saint and a water-monster (of a type common throughout the world); and the fact that newspapers have a 'silly season', so that even the paltriest sighting gets national or international media coverage.

To illustrate my point further, I shall describe two small research projects that I undertook in the field of cryptozoology. This is not to imply that this subject is particularly guilty of the charge; it merely reflects personal interests!

Almost all popular works on the 'unexplained' mention the activities of the 19th century amateur scientist Andrew Crosse, who claimed to have created mites (*acari*) in an electrical experiment. The creatures were duly named *Acarus electricus* (or *A. crossii*) and depicted in an electrical treatise published in 1849 by H M Noad. Both tale and illustration came to be reproduced many times over the years, with a flurry of newspaper stories in the late 1920s.

The saga appeared in Rupert Gould's book *Oddities* (1928) and, in an interesting note to the revised (1944) edition, Gould explains that "an authority upon *acari*, Dr A C Oudemans of Arnhem" had informed him, in 1934, that Crosse's creatures were "quite certainly the common [house-mite] *Glycophagus domesticus*", which is very tenacious of life and capable of entering containers which appear to be hermetically sealed. Some years ago, I submitted copies of Noad's illustration to various experts in London and Oxford. The consensus view was in agreement with Oudemans, so that *Acarus electricus* was therefore a fiction. Yet, half a century after Oudemans' observation, books still regale the reader with the idea that Crosse's *acari* were out of the ordinary.

A trickier problem involved the Canvey Island "monsters". This was, on the face of it, a very intriguing account, for the events described took place in modern times close to London, in one of the most densely populated parts of the world. The story first appears (so far as I know) in *Stranger Than Science* by Frank Edwards, originally published in 1959, but extensively reprinted since. This version, essentially unchanged, reappeared in *Charles Berlitz's World of Strange Phenomena* (1995). It is not clear where Edwards originally obtained his material, but he is known to have made extensive use of the files of *Fate* magazine.

In essence, the account describes the stranding of two mysterious sea-creatures on the beach at Canvey Island, in the Thames Estuary, during November 1953 and August 1954. The second of these animals was noted to have sharp teeth, a gaping mouth, two "short legs and perfect feet" ... and gills. This last feature means that it was almost certainly a species of fish, though we are told that the scientists who submitted a report to the British government who were reportedly "perplexed".

When I first embarked on the trail of this story, it proved highly elusive. Enquiries to the Natural History Museum, Marine Biology Association Laboratory at Plymouth, and the National Rivers Authority drew a blank. Likewise, searches of the Press Association cuttings library and national newspaper collection at Colindale both proved fruitless.

Finally, at the turn of the year, I wrote to a local newspaper in Southend-on-Sea which covered the area of the strandings. Almost immediately, a local man replied to my enquiry. He recalled that the animal had been identified as an angler-fish. At the time it had caused some excitement because a rumour spread that it was a coelacanth – the second specimen of this ancient fish had been found the previous year in the Comores.

A little later, I received a letter from Alwyne Wheeler, formerly an ichthyologist with the Department of Zoology at the Natural History Museum, informing me of his opinion that the stranded specimen was almost certainly the angler-fish *Lophius piscatorius*. Apparently, the fleshy pectoral fins are often mistaken by lay observers for short-legs-with-feet. In his book *The Tidal Thames* (1979), Wheeler mentions a 68lb angler-fish being caught on the shore of Canvey Island in 1967, and a 1972 stranding at Dagenham, on the very outskirts of London.

The moral of my story is that a little patient research into the provenance of a fortean tale can go a very long way. If we wish to be regarded seriously, we must use serious methods of enquiry. An added bonus is that we shall come to distinguish the pseudo-mysteries from the true ones.

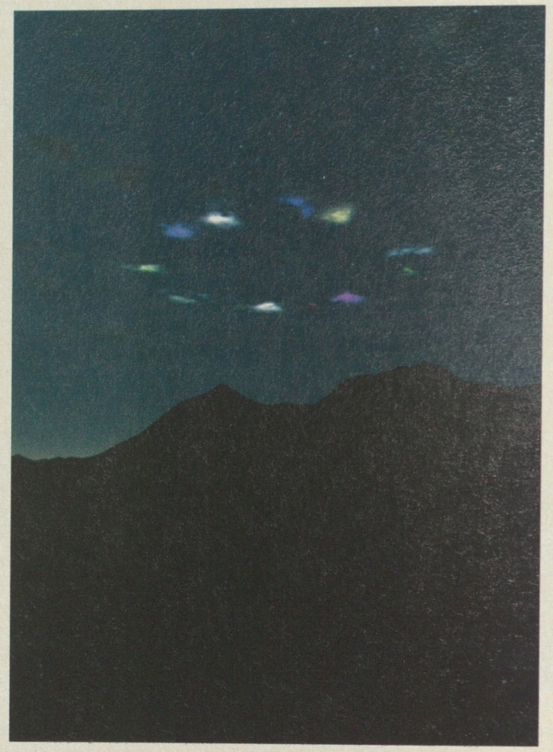
NICK WARREN IS A SURGEON AND MEDICAL ADVISER TO *FT*. FOUNDING EDITOR OF *RIPPERANA* (1992), HE HAS ALSO WRITTEN TWO BOOKS ON THE JACK THE RIPPER CASE.

NO WELCOME IN THE HILLSIDE

Lights were seen and tremors felt on the Berwyn Mountains in North Wales on 23 January 1974. Here, JENNY RANDLES responds to Andy Roberts' report in Issue 118, claiming that there is much more about the incident that is still unexplained.

Andy, in his usual wicked way, infers that I – like other "duff ufologists" – was taken in by tall tales and built a spaceship out of a few stray lights. It is not that simple.

For a start, I was certainly not an armchair observer because, during 1978, I lived for weeks in the remote Berwyn village of Llandrillo, talked with locals and visited the event location. This case has always interested me; it was discussed in my book *UFO Reality* as long ago as 1983 and, in 1995, I reopened the debate in my book *UFO Retrievals*. The year before that, I talked about it at the *FT* UnConvention.



JONATHAN BALDWIN

When I first delved into the case 20 years ago, I thought it could be an 'earthlight' event. About the time the lights were seen on the mountain, there had been a tremor and, sometime later, a bright meteor was seen crossing Britain. [See William Porter's reports in ***FT4*** and ***FT5*** – Eds.]

At Llandrillo, witnesses told me informally of two distinct sets of lights: one on the mountain itself soon after 8.30pm and another that flew across the sky between 9.30pm and 10.00pm. The latter was almost certainly the meteor. Some recalled the shaking caused by the tremor, associating it with the first lights, not the meteor. I myself saw what may have been an earthlight from my caravan looking across the River Dee towards the Berwyns. All this was reported to Paul Devereux, then researching earthlights.

I first began to question whether the event was a natural phenomenon when people told me of a military presence on the mountains in the days following the incident, seemingly searching for something. Then Margaret Fry, who had retired to this part of Wales, passed to me stories from local people that she had collected (but she refused my request for their phone numbers to protect their confidentiality).

Once, when Peter Hough and I lectured on UFOs to officers at RAF Shawbury, a decade after the Berwyn event, I questioned the official Ministry of Defence (MoD) explanation for the RAF presence on the mountain – looking for a meteorite, they said, a task not usually given to the RAF. It was more plausible, I ventured, that a military aircraft had suffered a mishap. I will never forget the awkward silence, even from the senior personnel who had come far to hear me speak.

Consequently, I came to believe that an RAF aircraft might have dropped some nuclear material on the Berwyns. This would have certainly resulted in an RAF search operation and the meteor later that night would provide a convenient cover story. I agree with Andy that it is highly unlikely that a wrecked jet plane could be spirited away without evidence – but perhaps something fell from a plane during a low-level fast run.

Many stories given to Margaret Fry by local witnesses fit with this scenario, including Pat Evans' account of being turned back from the mountain by a military patrol. Andy implies that I and others made this up, but ever since Pat asked me to correct this in 1996, I have given her direct testimony that she saw other people in the area that night and had not been turned away by anyone. It is unfair of Andy to say that I relied solely on Margaret's now "provably false" story about Pat Evans; such confusion often happens when a witness is interviewed several times over many years.

Andy ignores the matter of the anomalous radiation levels recorded at a site on the Berwyns, just above Llandrillo, first published by Devereux. The readings were taken about a week after the incident in 1974; they were not thought relevant at the time and were recorded as an anomaly.

After my UnConvention talk, a science correspondent with a UK newspaper told me that he once investigated an increase in cases of childhood leukaemia over the last 20 years in the Bala area. The nuclear plant at Trawsfynedd, a few miles away, had been blamed, but his investigation found the plant to be clean and the story was dropped. Of course, the journalist told me, "I had no idea that the Llandrillo event had occurred near Bala 20 years earlier."

I must say I have never supported the story that an alien was recovered from the Berwyn 'UFO crash' and taken to Aldermaston. Andy seems to think that it was this story – first mentioned at the 1996 Quest conference in Yorkshire – that brought the case back into the public eye, but by then I had discussed the case in lectures, an article (in *Sightings*) and in *Retrievals*, all without any reference to an alien body. The 'witness' telling the 'dead alien' tale has not yet come forward to be questioned.

What is certain is that the Quest conference brought the alien body story to the attention of the tabloid press. By curious timing, it appeared alongside my speculations that a military accident involving nuclear material could have occurred on the Berwyns. That same week, a major ITV current affairs programme reported on an incident during the 1950s in which an accident at a military base in southern England caused a radiation leak. Local doctors told of a rise in cancers near the base since that time. The MoD had covered up the accident for 40 years.

So what did happen on the Berwyns in 1974? Perhaps the alien body story is nonsense; perhaps the 'radiation leak' story was just a coincidence; perhaps Andy is right about the poachers' lights… but I feel there is still more to this case than meets the eye.

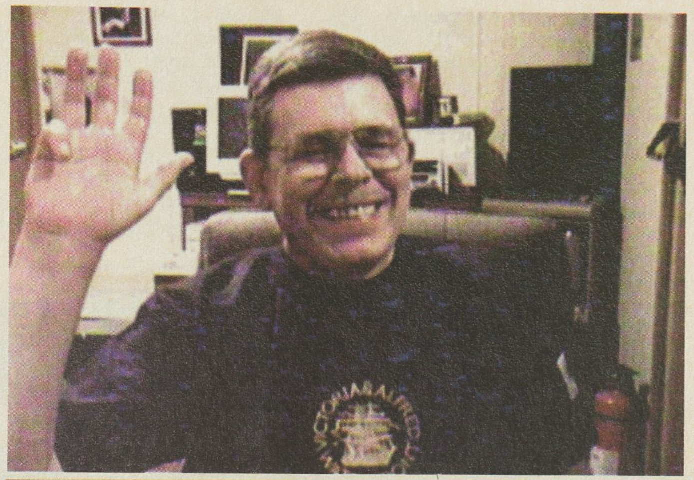
VETERAN UFOLOGIST **JENNY RANDLES** IS THE AUTHOR OF A NUMBER OF BOOKS ON UFOLOGY AND THE PARANORMAL AND HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH MANY TV PROGRAMMES.

THE BELL TOLLS FOR ART?

Probably not. BRUCE WRIGHT examines the mysterious goings and comings of US radio's paranormal huckster, Art Bell.

Connoisseurs of our closing scenes in the Human Comedy were briefly appalled in October by the mysterious, truncated 'retirement' of Art Bell, America's fourth-most popular radio personality. Many *FT* readers will already know of the redoubtable Bell, who, via syndicated radio and Internet transmission, is almost certainly the English-speaking world's largest purveyor of uncritical, shall we say, information on ufology, psi powers, and other popular items from the New Age's portmanteau. (Art's programmes are archived on the Internet and may be heard via Real Player at http://ww2.broadcast.com/artbell)

ART APPEARS TO BELIEVE JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING REGARDLESS OF ANY CONTRADICTIONS



ART BELL WEBCAM

DISAPPEARING ACT: 12 October, 1998, 22:01:19 – Art's final Studio Cam photo.

For 14 years, Bell has broadcast from a trailer home in the tiny hamlet of Pahrump, Nevada, in the very shadow of Area 51, and indeed it is difficult to imagine his silky voice originating from anywhere other than the brooding Southwest. There's something about his appealing mixture of boyish enthusiasm and doom-laden paranoia that is as ineffably and indisputably western as a lever-action Winchester.

Charles Fort urged us to believe as little as possible, while Art appears to believe just about everything, regardless of any inherent contradictions. Curiously, this seems to bring him to a position not far from fortean in its affable acceptance of a surpassingly odd universe. And while Fort promised only to make his damned data march, Bell's marvels whiz by on a speedy conveyor belt, as related by assorted abduction 'experiencers' and ufologists; remote viewers and prophets of ecological doom; ghost hunters, vitamin enthusiasts and pop psychologists. All of them buoyed by Art's infectious hyperbole, so like the greedy excitement of a child on Christmas morning: "Shocking! Remarkable! A heart-stopper!"

Unlike America's other major radio personalities, who tend to be hectoring fascists, Bell pursues no particular political or social agenda beyond his promotion of what he calls "the "Quickening", an amorphous concept that seems essentially to mean that the world is just plain going to hell. Or something. He is also unusual in his unfailing courtesy toward his callers, who… well… Ghandi thought the cow was a "poem of pity", but then he never conversed with these worthies.

The dismay among Art's flock was deep and immediate when, at the end of his 13 October broadcast, Bell announced that he was quitting the airwaves due to "a threatening terrible event" concerning his family. He gave no clue as to the nature of this threat, but Art's fans are nothing if not open to conspiracy theories and so, into the vacuum, naturally swept an array of explanations. For instance, one brief rumour had it that South African henchmen of Bill Clinton had threatened Bell's family to stop talk of impeachment on his show. Richard Hoagland worried that Bell might be under threat by "rogue elements" within the US government. "Something has to be terribly wrong," Hoagland told the *Boston Globe* (17 October). "There are people in these federal agencies that make *Rambo* look like a Sunday school picnic."

Such speculation paled, however, beside a tale that had Bell going into hiding on the advice of a man from the future, called 'Single Seven', who warned the host that his programme had offended government leaders. (Bell's people quickly denied the Single Seven story, to my relief at least.)

On October 19, Bell let drop a few crumbs of hope via a taped message on his radio show, then being handled by a guest host. His network was "doing their very best to help resolve the situation," whatever that might be. By this time, Bell's refusenik status had garnered a good deal of attention from the broader world beyond saucerdom. According to Bell himself, his home became a "media zoo" during the hiatus, complete with circling helicopters (colour not mentioned) and a "full-time encampment" of reporters around his home. And on 23 October, Bell abruptly announced his return to broadcasting, effective at month's end.

And now all is as it was and should be. In short order, Bell rejoined the fray with several days' worth of discussion on a possible alien signal from the Pegasi system (see Fortean Bureau of Investigation on page 22 for a full analysis) as well as an appearance by a still-spry Erich von Däniken. At this time, Art still refuses to discuss his two-week retirement save to say that the situation, whatever the hell it was, remains grave but is improving.

In the midst of the hiatus, Peter Gersten of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy (CAUS) reported a rumour that Bell's absence was a ploy connected with a contract negotiation. Bell denied this angrily. However, there was an interesting story in the *Washington Post* of 30 October on the Bell affair that mentions a new, seven-year contract with his network.

Whatever the reason, I am more than glad to have Art back, filling the wee hours with his parade of wonders, without which my insomniac nights would be poorer. It's the perfect soundtrack for evening excursions through the Martian wastes along America's Interstate 10, when the mesas gleam like cloud castles in the moonlight and the violet darkness seems pregnant with possibilities.

BRUCE LANIER WRIGHT IS A POP-CULTURE HISTORIAN AND AVID, IF PUZZLED, FORTEAN FROM TEXAS , THE AUTHOR OF TWO BOOKS. HE IS A CONTRIBUTING EDITOR FOR *STRANGE* MAGAZINE.

LETTERS

CONTACT US... BY POST BOX 2409, LONDON NW5 4NP, UK; FAX US ON 0171 485 5002; OR E-MAIL TO sieveking@forteantimes.com PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH YOUR POSTAL ADDRESS.

COLLECTIVE MONIKERS

Nils Erik Grande asked what was the proper collective noun for a group of aliens [*FT117:53*]. Dusting down the *Boke of St Albans*, attributed to Juliana Berners (1486), I found the answer among the following: a dopping of sheldrake, a superfluity of nuns and a buckram of aliens. Honest.

NIGEL JONES
Barnham,
West Sussex

GLOWING CENTIPEDES

While walking in a dark wood on Hallowe'en, I found a green glowing centipede (not a glow-worm), its entire body emitting light. I found out that it is a member of the genera *Geophilous* and that no-one knows why or even how it shines its light. They are common enough, but to see them glowing is a rare honour. I wonder if any readers have heard other reports of this.

IAN B DUNNE
Southampton

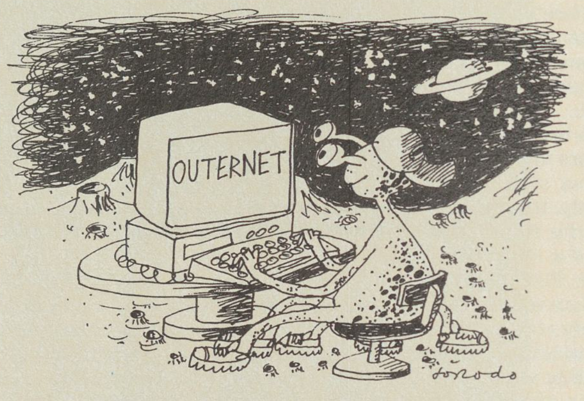
LANDING PLANS

I am a postgraduate student studying architecture at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. In the research stages of my work I encountered information relating to UFO sightings in Bonnybridge – the Falkirk Triangle. I intend to develop proposals for a beacon/tower structure and a landing site for UFOs to promote interest in the subject and local area. As a secondary development, a science fiction park will provide education, recreation and related facilities for the public and enthusiasts. The primary intention of the development is to promote science through science fiction. It can be compared with the space programme in the late 1960s which prompted many young people into science.

Additional questions include: What facilities should be included? How would an alien being choose a landing site? Would an intensely luminous tower/beacon and landing site be adequate? How could a beacon communicate to the alien craft? What plans, strategies and facilities should we prepare in the event of alien contact?

Finally, could anyone provide me with any information about existing science fiction theme parks?

YAN TUNG LI
Glasgow, Scotland



DARKMAN MYTH

The other day I was reading *Borderlands* by Mike Dash, which reminded me of the splendid tale of the Mad Gasser of Mattoon. As well as having a keen interest in forteana, I'm also a huge fan of comics. By chance I was later reading *DC Comics: Sixty Years of the World's Favourite Comic Book Heroes* by Les Daniels, when it suddenly struck me that the Mad Gasser of Mattoon was something of a ringer for the 'Golden Age' version of the Sandman (not to be confused with Neil Gaiman's character from the 1980s).

A vigilante in the grand tradition of comic book heroes, the Sandman not only dresses in a long dark coat and a big hat, but also wears a gas-mask to protect himself from the sleeping-gas he sprays in the villains' faces with a sort of Flit gun. This last detail in particular is so similar to the Mattoon Gasser that I can't help but think there is some connection, whatever explanation one chooses for the Mattoon Gasser – psychological archetype, Walter Mitty housebreaker, or even *tulpas* formed by the human subconscious.

Although the Sandman was never a superstar, he did feature in the popular Justice Society of America books – alongside the Flash and the Green Lantern – which DC started publishing in Summer 1940, some years before the events in Mattoon. In the 1980s, a nostalgic DC revived the character in the comic *Sandman Mystery Theatre*, where current readers can check the resemblance. I have never heard this resemblance remarked upon in any articles about Mattoon and I only noticed it myself because I happened to read the two books five minutes apart – and I'm a pretty dedicated comic book fan.

Of course, this still doesn't help explain what happened in Botetourt County, Virginia, in 1933, before the Sandman was created. But, I think the Shadow was already around, and he was a huge star on radio and in the pulps. While he lacks the Flit gun, he is elusive, and well... shadowy. One last thought: isn't it interesting how these shadowy 'men in black' archetypes keep turning up in myth in various forms?

SEFTON DISNEY
Taunton, Somerset

HIEROGLYPHIC ERRATUM

There are fatal errors in the printed version of my review for Richard Poe's *Black Spark White Fire* [***FT117:55***] which were not in my original. I refer to the final paragraph of column two. The passage in question should have read: "There's a folk-etymology that a hieroglyph of a woman's vagina was used in the Egyptian word for 'coward' to imply that cowards behaved like women. There's no such hieroglyph. But there is a phonetic hieroglyph, **ḥm**, of a cow's pudenda used in one of the eight synonyms for woman and in one of the nine synonyms for coward (by itself **ḥm** can also mean 'testicle') which'd explain this confused belief."

The most crucial error was **ḥ** instead of **ḥm**. **ḥ** on its own is represented by a twisted wick, one of the most common hieroglyphs. Please print a correction and save me much unnecessary embarrassment.

BARBARA BARRETT
Reading, Berkshire

MISSIVE MIX-UP

On reading 'Inside-Outside' [***FT116:50***] I was stunned to find someone else using my original models of the primary and secondary aspects of subjectivity and objectivity. I then glanced to the end of the letter and was even more surprised to find it was me who had written it! As I had no recollection of doing this, I made enquiries and discovered the text had been edited from a letter I wrote to *FT* (not meant for publication) in late 1996.

This text constitutes the second chapter of an unfinished book, an abridged version of which was published in Mensa's newsletter *The Aquarian* (Issue 81, July–August 1997), entitled 'Your very own excellent adventure (supplementary log)' and is copyright protected.

CHAY TANA
Wise Acres, Skegness

JOHN R. DOCHERTY

TIME OUT

In 1997 I attended a conference in Alice Springs and a mate, Rob, travelled with me. After the conference, we decided to visit Uluru (Ayer's Rock). Before heading off, I filled up with gas using a credit card. We calculated it to be a four-hour trip allowing time to get back to Curtain Springs before dark.

I was merrily driving along when I became aware that something was distinctly wrong – the sun had set. I pointed this out to Rob who was wide awake and we pulled over. We were completely at a loss and more than a little bit scared; you see, the sun didn't set until around 6pm and we had left Alice Springs at noon.

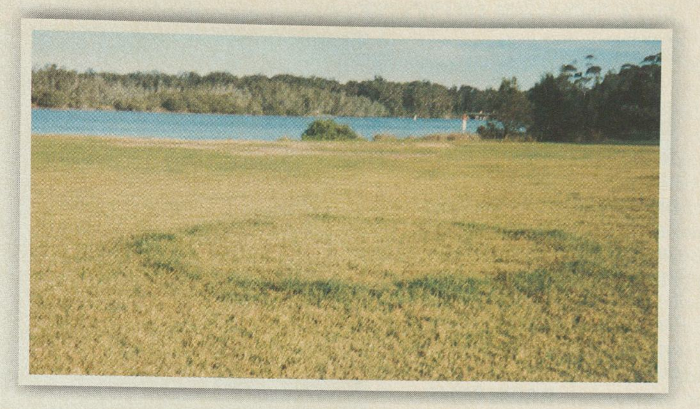
I checked the fuel receipt and it confirmed that I had filled up at 12.06pm. The engine temperature, odometer and fuel gauge were normal, but we had taken six hours to travel a distance that should have taken only three. There had been no parties, no drugs and no grog that day. The rest of the trip was uneventful. We still don't know what happened during that missing portion of our lives.

WARWICK ALDERTON
Roma, Queensland

PARK ROUNDS

I had just been reading about crop circles and Earth energies when I found my very own mysterious circle during a stroll through a park. It is located in a public area near a playground in Tomakin, on the south coast of New South Wales, Australia. My friend suggested someone had thrown fertiliser or a similar element around in a perfect circle. Who knows?

BARBARA BURKOWSKY
Manly, New South Wales



CONSPIRACY RATIONALE

I thoroughly enjoyed Mike Jay's piece 'L'Affaire Sokal' [***FT116:46-47***], but I would like to make one or two observations. In particular I would like to take issue with the implication that forteans are necessarily aligned with the anti-science movement, or, therefore, in some way necessarily allies of postmodernism. I for one, although very critical of scientific pretensions, have more sympathy with the scientists than with postmodern sophistry. Despite the pretensions of its advocates, postmodernism is not an unambiguously left-wing or progressive movement. Neither are all feminist writers necessarily postmodernists, and nor are defenders of science necessarily conservative.

If one were to take the fundamental assertions of postmodernism seriously, one could only conclude that it is a doctrine, or set of intellectual stances, perfectly consistent with various forms of right-wing authoritarianism. After all, if every 'reality' is to be accorded equal status and prestige as a model of the way the world is, then there are no grounds whatsoever – empirical, ethical or conceptual – for rejecting, for example, the excesses of Nazi race science or their commitment to Hans Hörbiger's (potty?) Hollow Earth thesis. Furthermore, postmodernism removes any sound basis for assessing evidence because rationality itself is called into question and dismissed as part of a scientistic conspiracy. This itself would make the *Fortean Times*, for example, extremely suspect. I disagree that Charles Fort would have had any sympathy with this sort of position at all. His stance is much more congenial to a thoroughgoing philosophical scepticism, but illuminated with a desire to truly understand the universe, not merely talk about it endlessly. To my mind, Fort would have been far more sympathetic to Sokal (and Bricmont), although I admit this is arguable.

The key to the real nature of postmodernist 'thought' (I reject the claim that they are serious philosophers) is to be found in the incomprehensibility of postmodern prose. Any movement that is seriously concerned with social progress will present its ideas openly so that everyone can join in the debate. But postmodern discourse is marked by a smug elitism and childish delight in exclusivity. Those who are in the 'out group' are kept firmly in their place by aggressive and arrogant exclusionary linguistic tactics and an obscurantism that beggars belief and stretches patience. In fundamentals, it is really quite at variance with the intentions of Charles Fort, and Sokal names it well when he calls it an 'intellectual terrorism'. I am fully with Sokal when he asserts that postmodernism will not provide us with a cure for AIDS, or help us solve any of the major problems we now face. By its very nature, it is ill-equipped even to begin the process of discovery.

In my view postmodernism leads inevitably to a destructive, evasive and essentially conservative quietism that can neither help us solve problems nor lead to any fruitful understanding of life, the universe or anything. Indeed, as a new but sterile pseudo-mysticism, postmodernism offers little of value that has not already been said by others, and even finding that is like hunting for the Snark. Science and scientists may be flawed, but postmodernism offers no alternatives.

LES PRINCE
Edgbaston, Birmingham

Mike Jay's 'L'affaire Sokal' raises a linguistic question, in that a lot of the problems that arise in interpreting scientific theory derive from the translation from maths to language. Often a metaphor has to be used to approximate something that can be described quite accurately in mathematics. Compounding this is the fact that the commentator may not fully understand the theory he/she is discussing or writing about. The scientist trying to explain his/her ideas may not be as adept at language as he/she is at science. Mathematics may be value free (?), but other languages are defiantly not. This seems to be often forgotten when discussing science, and it is something we, as forteans, would do well to remember.

PAT JOHNSTON
Patrick@h248.demon.co.uk

RAT PACK

The letter about those rats moving *en masse* across a field with one rat leading [***FT115:52***] reminds me of something my father told me. Until their house suffered fire damage in the Blitz, my father lived with his parents in Coventry. One night, my grandfather was walking up Broadgate when he saw a seething mass of rats moving down High Street with one lone rat leading. A policeman also saw it. Both assumed that the rat's habitation had been destroyed and that they were looking for new quarters. As a result of the blackout, the rats just disappeared into the darkness.

G M STOCKER
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire

The experience of Mr Williams' father is not unprecedented. Towards the end of the last century, the Dorset naturalist R Bosworth Smith was walking near Puddletown when he saw a remarkable rat – a king among rats. It was old, grey and as big as a polecat. Crossing the road, it was followed by hundreds of other rats, which appeared in a stream. When they had all passed, Smith was curious enough to look in the field whence they had come. In the corner was a threshing machine set up ready for use the next day. This would have surrounded the standing corn and cut them off if their leader had not taken them elsewhere. He wrote an account of the incident in his *Bird Life and Bird Lore* (1909, p34).

Of course, the story can be described as a migratory legend, but that doesn't really explain anything. Neither Bosworth Smith nor the elder Mr Williams, as far as I can make out, had heard of other examples – they thought they were witnessing something unique. Other incidents like this were discussed in the nature notes of *The Countryman* about 10 years ago.

JEREMY HARTE
Bourne Hall, Ewell

LEFT-HAND DRIVER

In 1983, when I was 19 years old, I was a front-seat passenger in my friend's Datsun car. Both of us, and two of his friends in the back seat, were on our way home from a party. We had all been drinking, but none of us was drunk. As we went round a bend, my friend lost control of the car. We were going downhill, swerving from one side of the road to the other. The guys in the back were screaming. Suddenly the car spun round and rolled onto its roof with a tremendous crash.

We were all injured, but nobody was killed. The thing is, somehow I and the driver swopped seats. We were both belted in, yet as the car rolled over and crashed onto its roof we, in that moment, swapped seats.

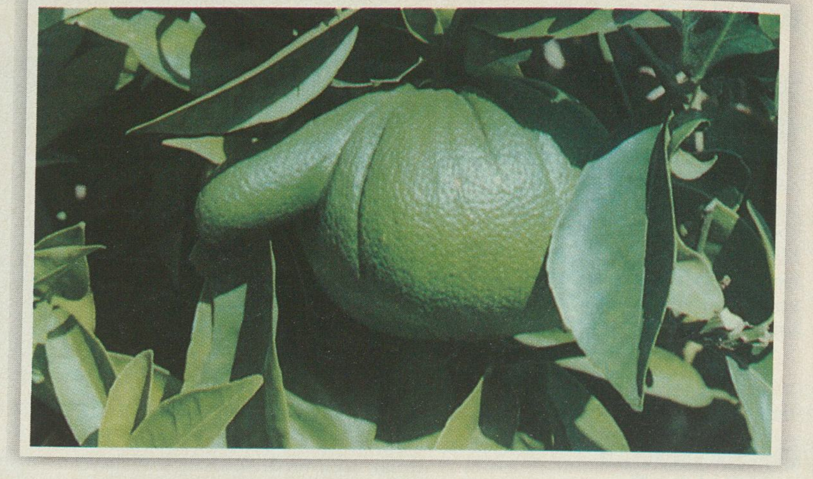
All I know is that where I was sitting in the front passenger seat the roof of the car had completely caved in and those who saw it said it was an absolute miracle I ever got out alive. Can any readers shed any light on this?

JOHN HANCOCK
Braintree, Essex

SEEDLESS?

I found this orange on a tree in my yard here in Santa Barbara, California. I don't think I need explain what it looks like. I'm hoping that it stays on the tree long enough to go orange in colour, but I can't count on that so I'm sending the picture now while it's still attached.

ROBIN SOLIS
Santa Barbara, California



NOT YET FACT

Steve Gunning's letter "Isotope Terror" [***FT117:52***] refers to a scare about a rogue isotope of water that could be released into the world's water table, wiping out Life As We Know It. This is actually the main plot line of Kurt Vonnegut's marvellous *Cat's Cradle* (1963). The isotope in question is 'Ice-nine', a water isotope that causes a chain reaction on contact with normal water, turning it into ice. The release of a single molecule into the environment would cause all water on Earth to solidify. Interestingly, Vonnegut prefaces the book with the following: "Nothing in this book is true. Live by the *foma* [harmless untruths] that make you brave and kind and healthy and happy."

WILL CLARK
Bolton, Lancashire

BEACHED LEVIATHANS

I wonder if any readers can acquaint me with further references to the Herring Hogg "stranded on the shores of Wirral in 1636", other than the following mention in Christina Hole's *Traditions and Customs of Cheshire*:

"It was 15 yards [14m] high, and 20 yards and one foot [18.6m] in length. Its voice was evidently powerful, for its cry could be heard six or seven miles [10–11km] away, and was 'so hideous that none dared come near it for some time.'"

Another strange creature was found not so very far away, in the river Dee near Chester, on 8 May 1782. The *Chester Courant* reported the finding at the time and reprinted its account in 1874 in its antiquarian column, 'The Cheshire Sheaf'. I am indebted to my friend Scott Lloyd for pointing the reference out to me. The description is a remarkably full and level-headed one for the 18th century:

"The length of it is 25 feet [7.6m]; the girth proportionally large, though very unequal; it has two dorsal and six pectoral fins – two of the latter of a vast singular form, partaking of the nature of feet. The tail is perpendicular, of prodigious size and strength; there are five gills on each side. The mouth, when open to its extremity, is three feet (90cm) wide; there are not any teeth, but a vast quantity of small, irregular sharp prominences, which are evidently given it for the purpose of comminuting its food, the orifice of the throat being astonishingly narrow for a creature of such magnitude.

"The upper and under jaws are each furnished with ten strong protuberant bones, horizontally placed, which meet when the mouth closed, in such a manner as to appear capable of breaking almost any substance. The eye is situated very near the mouth, and scarcely larger than that of an ox; the nose is hard and prominent; the whole body is covered with a very thin skin, and the weight of the fish is between four and five tons."

The reporter added, hopefully: "We have been thus particular, as it is probable that some ingenious Naturalist may favour the public with the certain information of its real species."

We must assume that his request went unanswered (previous, rejected, suggestions made had been a basking shark, a spermaceti whale and a grampus). Can any cryptozoologically-minded reader make an identification?

RICHARD HOLLAND
Mold, Flintshire

AIDS SCARELORE

The letter about AIDS scare stories ('Spreading Like Wildfire', ***FT116:52***) almost made me spill my beer. I work as a DJ in a popular Manchester nightclub several nights a week, one of those being Wednesday (not a very busy night!). The general manager informed me that his daughters and some friends were due to come in to the club on a particular Wednesday some months ago. This surprised me as a very popular 1970s revival night in the city centre was *the* place to go. He told me that several people had been shot with blowpipe projected needles with the words "Welcome to the world of AIDS" tagged to them and he did not want them to be the next target. Several other friends of mine also came out with the same story – but for different clubs. I was also told that the story appeared in the *Manchester Evening News*.

DAVE WHITE
Manchester

I thought you might be interested to know that the AIDS foaftale tale doing the rounds in Cardiff has now come to Reading. As I was driving a few friends home after a night on the town, one of them stated, really seriously, that someone with syringes was going round the local clubs and a mate's friend was ill with AIDS after an attack. Someone else in the car then said that they had heard the same story, although this occurred up north somewhere, possibly Birmingham.

DAVID MARCUS
Reading, Berkshire

While the AIDS scare stories were circulating in Cardiff, they were also rife here in Watford. It started off when my friend told me that her boyfriend's sister had been in a nightclub queue and had been injected with the virus. Then the next day another friend told of a friend working in the local hospital who had heard the same story. In the same week, a new member of staff at my workplace told of her friend having exactly the same thing happen to them. All the victims of the attackers were female and blonde and all the attacks happened outside one of four local nightclubs. We were all a bit spooked by this, as the information seemed to be the same from every source.

M WRIGHT
Watford, Hertfordshire

A month before Peter Rogers' letter on AIDS scarelore appeared, I was told a similar story by a friend from Bodmin, who seemed quite disturbed by the information. A friend of a friend's daughter had been out to a nightclub in Newquay a few weeks before and had felt a pricking in her back. On closer inspection, it turned out to be a syringe full of blood, pinning a note to her which read: "You are now HIV positive". For all I know it may be a true story. But even if you're sceptical, you can't really go "nyah nyah – it's an urban myth" can you? It seems so cruel.

Now then, I've also recently heard reports of some tourists in South America being attacked by "flying slugs". Apparently they are slugs with wings. Do any readers know of any such animal?

NIGEL AYERS
Lostwithiel, Cornwall

FITTING IT TOGETHER

I'd like to say how much my husband and I enjoy your publication – a charming mælstrom which we look forward to every month.

A strange thing happened once, though. We had a friend who used to visit us every now and then and who was heavily into the UFO phenomenon and was working out his own personal unified field theory of the Universe. Naturally, this began to take quite a toll on his nerves as there were so many things that 'didn't fit'. Still, he was determined.

We thought we would introduce him to your publication as a way of saying "Hey, relax. It might never fit, and not only is that okay, it's downright beautiful". The last time I saw him, he was walking down our driveway with six issues of *Fortean Times* tucked beneath his arm. We think about him once in a while, and imagine him desperately trying to rework weeping virgins, possessed cars and chupacabras into his 'theory of everything'. Steve, if you're out there, give us a call to let us know you're okay.

REBECCA NOVICK
Two Bat Productions,
Malibu, California

NIGHT STRIKE

In the summer of 1995 I was on holiday in Canada with my sister and family in Guelph (between Toronto and Niagara Falls). On 11 August I awoke at 5am and visited the bathroom. The sky in the distance was flashing constantly, but I heard no thunder. I returned to sleep, but was awakened by a tremendous crash at 5:45am, whereupon I found myself in the passage at the same time as my sister and her granddaughter. The lightning was constant and the thunder very frightening. We stayed in the corridor between the bedrooms until 6:30am and then returned to bed.

When I dressed – shorts and a swim top – I went into the kitchen. "What have you done to your arm?" asked my sister. I couldn't understand what she meant as I felt all right. "Near you shoulder," she said and then I saw a 3.5in (9cm) burn mark. During the day, a blister formed and my flesh became red, swollen and very painful. I am very tanned and the burn scar remained quite prominent for some time.

Also, the mobile phone appeared to have been struck by lightning and couldn't be repaired.

DOROTHY LANGFORD
London

TROUBLESHOOTER

In reply to Roberta Davies' letter [***FT111:50***], as a experienced medium — having put to rights some 200 different dwellings since 1972 (haunted places all privately owned) — I can verify that I have come across spirit presences (ghosts) that indeed have followed some house or flat occupants around. Those who are psychic unwittingly attract the presences who are drawn to the spirit light that psychics emit. Like moths drawn to a flame, spirit presences usually feel that the people they attach themselves to can help them in some way.

Buildings are no obstacle whatsoever if the presences are "spoken to", for they are living entities who haven't realised that they are supposed to be dead. They can be released from their own lack of understanding, which is basically what our little group does when called out, which gives great relief to these lost souls who are afraid to let go of their earthly surroundings. This is what we call "rescue work".

I have also carried out several successful exorcisms in recent years, although this is very different work and requires complete banishment.

REV. PHILIP STEFF
Bath, Avon

FOUND AT LAST

I feel I can assist with the definitive location of Camelot [***FT117:12***]. It is at Charnock Richard in Lancashire, clearly signposted from the M6 as a "Theme Park".

GRAEME J KENNA
Wallasey, Merseyside

HOUSE OF DREAMS

Sandra Evans' quest for her dream house [***FT116:50***] reminded me very much of a house in Ilfracombe, North Devon, not far from her home in Exeter. Chambercombe Manor matches virtually all the features in her dream.

It is a large, long building on the west coast. The most interesting feature is a hidden room upstairs next to a bedroom (said to have been used by Lady Jane Grey) near a staircase. The story goes that some 400 years ago the house was owned by a notorious wrecker. Wreckers specialised in luring unsuspecting ships onto the rocks with lanterns on dark, stormy nights in order to plunder cargo, a practice fairly common in parts of North Devon at the time.

The teenage son of the wrecker, one William Oatway, got suspicious one night and followed his father while about his nefarious business. Fearing that his son would talk, the father sent William away to Cornwall to live with a tin-mining family. William eventually married, became the manager of a tin mine and had a daughter called Kate, very much loved by her father.

The family moved to the Island of Lundy and Kate married an Irish sea captain. Kate and her husband subsequently moved to Ireland. William eventually purchased his old family home of Chambercombe, but suffered serious money problems in the process. Because of this, he took up smuggling and wrecking as his father had done before him.

Unknown to her father, Kate decided to make a surprise visit and set sail from Ireland. William and his wrecking crew lured the ship onto the rocks and proceeded to loot it. William found Kate badly injured and dying in the wreckage, but failed to recognise her. He took her home to Chambercombe Manor and robbed her of her gold and jewellery before she died. William soon discovered from a journalist friend the names of the passengers and crew of the wrecked ship and realised with horror that the dead girl was his beloved daughter.

Filled with dreadful remorse and guilt, William walled up Kate's body in a small bedroom and eventually left Chambercombe. He ended up living alone in a small cottage in Cornwall. On his deathbed he made a full written confession which was only discovered some 150 years later. Around 1865, the then tenant of Chambercombe Manor noticed an extra window frame while doing some roof repairs. On investigation the sealed room was discovered next to Lady Jane Grey's bedroom. Here, among the cobwebs and dust, the skeleton of a woman was found. The newly-found confession and the discovery of the hidden room tied up all the loose ends and Kate is now buried in Ilfracombe. The ghosts of both William and Kate are said to haunt Chambercombe Manor with fairly recent sightings of a man walking the rooms of the locked and empty manor house at night.

If this should turn out to be the right house, it would be interesting to know if Ms Evans had ever visited Chambercombe Manor as a child – or perhaps there is a stranger explanation for her recurring dreams.

ANDREW HOMER
Dudley, West Midlands

MAN-BIRD

In June 1998 I went on a biology field trip to Marlow's Sands in Wales to study the ecology on the local rocky shores with my biology group. While there, some friends and myself walked along the clifftops. One of our friends had stayed behind, so when we saw a large figure standing further along the path we thought it was him, sitting on a style. That was the point at which it took off and flew over the edge of the cliff. This 'Man-Bird' appeared to be a very large raven, about human size with a fairly wide wingspan. If anyone else has reported seeing the 'Man-Bird' in the area, or if local farmers have been losing lambs, please let me know.

SIMON CLABBY
clabmanx@yahoo.com

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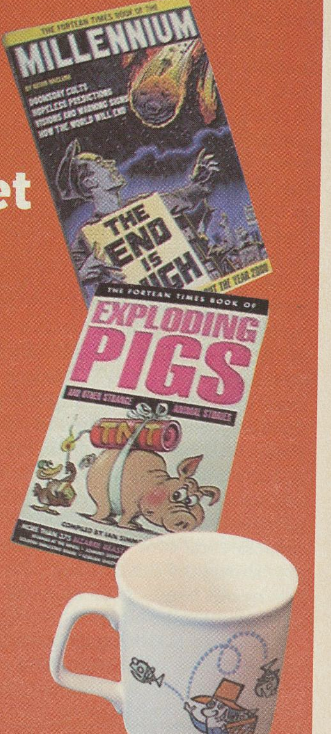
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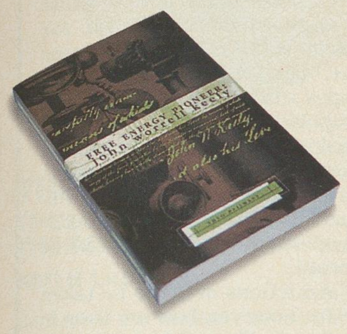
MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE



FREE ENERGY PIONEER: JOHN WORRELL KEELY

THEO PAIJMANS

IllumiNet Press, Lilburn, Georgia. 1998, pb $19.95, pp472, index, refs, illus. ISBN 1–8815–3215–1

This is a magnificent contribution to anomaly literature; a monument of research, rich in information presented with clarity, backed with detailed references and a wealth of illustration. The subject is the enigmatic American inventor J W Keely, whose death 100 years ago closed a career of unrelieved failure which puzzled his contemporaries and has continued to bemuse researchers ever since. His detractors have dismissed him as a charlatan and a fraud and, for 100 years, he has been relegated to the catalogue of crazy inventors whose activities on the margins of science are of interest only to the collector of curiosities. With this book, Paijmans totally demolishes this perceived image. Never again will it be adequate to dismiss Keely as simply a vulgar charlatan.

On the other hand, what was he? Crazy inventor? Mystic? Visionary? Probably all of these. Paijmans depicts Keely as either an engineer who saw beyond his motors to transcendental forces or, alternatively, as a visionary who sought to constrain occult forces within the confines of nuts-and-bolts machinery. Either way, he was far from being either a naïve dreamer or vulgar fraud. His lifestyle was simple, austere even; he worked hard, for very little pecuniary reward. He derived no income from his inventions because they were all failures; his only support came from investors who believed in him. Were they deceived? In a sense, yes, since each lost every cent he invested. Yet despite the continual disappointments, there were few recriminations.

The greatest difficulty facing his biographer – and anyone who interests himself in Keely – is the lack of documentation. All his notes and records, and all that remained of his inventions, vanished at his death – no-one knows to where. Paijmans has had to reconstruct his life-story from whatever sources he could lay his hands on, including fugitive pieces by his faithful backer Clara Bloomfield-Moore, newspaper articles, cuttings and scraps garnered here and there. It is much to Paijman's credit that he has amassed as much documentation as he has; yet for all his efforts, Keely remains a mysterious figure.

We do not know how much of what was said of Keely was fact or fiction. Did he impress hard-headed mining engineers with a device that would disintegrate rock? Did he use anti-gravity to enable ærial travel? Did he sensitise metals so that they could be welded without heat? Did he create substances unknown to science, whose astounding properties promised to revolutionise virtually every branch of engineering, manufacture and transportation?

All these and more were claimed, but although there is testimony for much of it, there is no material evidence. He built between 129 and 2,000 machines; estimates vary widely. Many were scrapped at a fraction of their cost, to generate funds for others; many were discarded even though they had cost thousands of dollars. Millions were invested in the mere hardware, to say nothing of experiment and research. The waste was appalling; the outcome nil.

KEELY WAS FAR FROM BEING EITHER A NAIVE DREAMER OR VULGAR FRAUD

There were many other reasons to suspect charlatanism. Not even his most loyal investors were given a complete explanation of what he was doing and how he was doing it. He employed an esoteric terminology, much of it invented by himself. Even when he used familiar words, he did so in an obscure way. When we read such statements as "the hydrogen is submitted to a triple order of vibration" or "liberating the sympathetic power in sensitised disks", we are left none the wiser.

To the chagrin of those who had invested money in a particular invention, Keely was forever switching from one line of research to another; uncompleted projects stood in dusty corners of his workshop. Breakthroughs were announced, but always postponed, never materialising.

But all this was characteristic of his age, a time of soaring dreams and unfettered aspirations. Much of Paijmans' book is devoted to setting Keely's career in a wider context. Other engineers were also pursuing unconventional lines of research; many, like him, were working with unknown forces, pursuing aims which savoured more of alchemy than mainstream science.

Those who treasure James Webb's great books on the occult establishment will find that Paijmans offers us a parallel history, surveying the same landscape but from a different perspective. He finds links to UFOs and Fulcanelli, Rennes-le-Chateau and Rosicrucians, mediums and secret societies galore.

Not that Keely espoused the occult or the magical, still less the supernatural. Yet he was hailed by such mystics as Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner and one commentator asserted that "there is reason to believe that Keely found the key to the cosmic life force".

One particularly interesting section deals with Keely's researches into ærial navigation, which Paijmans links to the airship scares of the 1890s and later. Whereas most historians of these episodes have focused on the sighting claims, here too we are offered a new perspective, approaching the story from the viewpoint of the many inventors who at this time were working on the problem of ærial navigation.

Paijmans' book, while it is as complete a biography of Keely as we can hope to obtain unless his papers are rediscovered, is much more than a simple life-story. It is a masterly survey of an amazing period in history, peopled with remarkable people doing remarkable things and dreaming remarkable visions. His various threads come together to form an intricate tapestry which makes today's 'New Age' seem pathetically superficial. In telling of these wondrous times and Keely's amazing career, Paijmans has given us a book of the very greatest importance, which no anomaly researcher should ignore.

HILARY EVANS

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SECRETS OF COLD WAR TECHNOLOGY
GERRY VASSILATOS

Borderland Sciences, Box 220, Bayside, CA 95524, USA. 1996, pb $15.95, index, bib, illus. ISBN 0–9456–8520–3

An intense book that claims to reveal the real secret behind the HAARP project. Vassilatos has delved deeply into the murky world of military research projects and counters the claims of conspiracy theorists that the huge HAARP antenna arrays are a new psychotronic weapon or a weather modifier. What he reveals about military involvement in radiation technologies (using X-rays, gamma rays and ultraviolet) is quite stunning and almost incomprehensible to the general reader in its wealth of detail. Essential reading for conspiracy trackers.

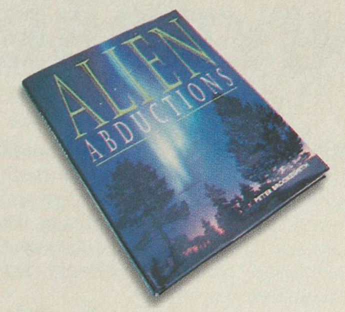
BOB RICKARD

THE ROAD OF EXCESS
BRIAN BARRITT

PSI Publishing, 1998, pb £9.99, pp315. ISBN 0–9532–7410–1

The memoirs of a British beat artist who accompanied Timothy Leary during his fugitive exile with the Black Panthers in Algeria and subsequently in Switzerland. Wild tales of high weirdness, telepathy, endless synchronicities with John Dee and Aleister Crowley and, of course, drugs, drugs and more drugs. A breathless (though typo-filled) read for pathologists of Sixties counterculture.

MIKE JAY



ALIEN ABDUCTION
PETER BROOKESMITH

Blandford/Cassell, London. 1998, hb £15.99, pp176, index, illus. ISBN 0–7137–2701–0

Peter Brookesmith's latest fearless foray into the bogs of contemporary ufology bluntly states its premise on the second page of text: "To step outside the rituals of the 'believer' versus 'skeptic' debate: for that has long since grown stale, and it often seems that the two sides are shouting so loudly that neither can hear what the other is saying."

But even the middle road has to lead somewhere and it's apparent where the author is headed here, long before the concluding chapter is reached. While it may not be possible to completely rule out the argument that some abductions are literal, physical events as described by the 'victims' (not necessarily a totally apt description we come to learn), there's a lot of existing mystery about the mind and mental states that need clarifying and eliminating.

After demolishing the exceedingly optimistic faith shown in regressive hypnosis, Brookesmith makes haggis out of three other shibboleths of the abduction-as-literal-event camp: namely content, consistency, and number. Via interviews with abductees – encountered on his own or through contacts while doing field research in America – Brookesmith pretty much paves over any argument that abductees are all telling the same basic tale of being kidnapped and greyhandled. Turns out there's a whole zoo of alien abductors out there, not all of them following the same manual.

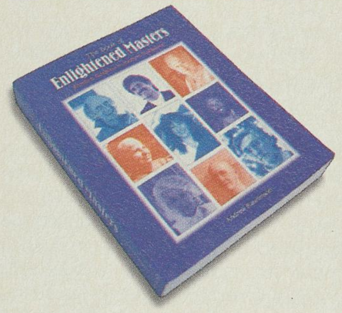
But what about the supposed consistency and sequence of the eight stages of abduction, first identified by folklorist Edward Bullard in 1987 and touted by many literalists ever since? (In order, they are capture, examination, conference, tour, otherworldly journey, theophany, return and aftermath.) Seems the consistency may not have been there from the start. Fully 38 per cent of the 270 or so abductions Bullard studied at the time didn't follow the 'correct' order. What about the 62 per cent that did? Elementary, says Brookesmith, drawing on the work of Martin Kottmeyer. "To put it simply, Bullard's correct order is the right way to tell a story."

Citing my own calculations elsewhere, Brookesmith observes that the huge numbers alleged for abductions (3.7 million Americans alone, according to one poll) collapse under their own weight. Extrapolated worldwide, we would be looking at more than 80 million abductions in the last half-century, perhaps many times more if individuals are abducted repeatedly throughout their lifetime, as some advocate.

If abductions aren't to be taken literally, however, how are they to be taken? Here Brookesmith's middle road runs into a few potholes of its own, arguably because there is no single easy answer, as the author himself admits, but a constellation of causes or circumstances that can't be readily circumscribed.

Thus some will take his conclusion – that "Whichever way we read the myth, it insists on telling us that we are the aliens" – as little more than a platitude. But then one would have to ask, among other questions, why the aliens' concerns – about issues of gene extraction, manipulation, and future survivability – expressed in their reported actions while simultaneously denied in their evident lack of emotions, so closely mimic our own current concerns.

DENNIS STACY



THE BOOK OF ENLIGHTENED MASTERS
WESTERN TEACHERS IN EASTERN TRADITIONS
ANDREW RAWLINSON

Open Court and La Salle, Carus Publishing Co, 315 Fifth St, PO Box 300, Peru, IL 61354-0300 USA. 1997, pb [price unknown], pp650, glossary, photos, index. ISBN 0–8126–9310–8.

This massive slab of a book delineates the fascinating phenomenon of Western versions of oriental spiritual disciplines. This cross-fertilisation is really no older than the Theosophical Society, founded by Madame Blavatsky in 1875. There are useful summaries of about 160 spiritual teachers, from the obvious – Paul Brunton, Lama Govinda, Idries Shah, the Mother, Ram Dass, Da Free John – to the truly odd, like E J Gold, author of *Autobiography of a Sufi*, a surrealist spoof of the journey in pursuit of secret knowledge (with affectionate digs at Gurdjieff) and Pierre Bernard, calling himself 'Oom the Omnipotent', who founded the Tantrik Order of America in New York in 1909.

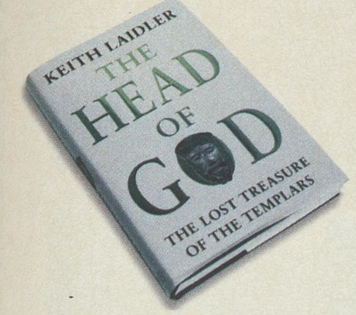
The entry on Gurdjieff and his disciples is a triumph of clarity and concision, considering the intentional trickery of the moustachioed sage. Inevitably, the exposure of shameless plagiarists and frauds – such as Paul Twitchell (founder of Eckankar) and his acolyte John-Roger Hinkins (founder of MSIA, pronounced 'Messiah") – and colourful rogues like the acid head and Hare Krishna guru Jayatirtha (decapitated in London in 1987) make for more entertaining reading than the summaries of more mainstream teachings.

There is a useful section on those eastern teachers who have made a big impression on the West, such as Krishnamurti, Yogananda, Meher Baba, Prabhupada and Ramana Maharshi. There are curious omissions – Maharishi, Maharaj Ji (the "fat boy"), Rajneesh (Osho), Sai Baba (mark II) and Anandamayi Ma – although there are some peripheral references.

The nature of the book – part history, part directory, and part metaphysical analysis – leads to a certain amount of repetition. Mr Rawlinson, a former lecturer in Buddhism, disentangles the various threads that constitute Sufism, Zen, Tibetan and Theravada Buddhism, but admits that trying to divide Hinduism is like "trying to sieve spaghetti".

The author creates an ingenious framework for classifying the various routes to enlightenment based on the polarities hot/cool and structured/unstructured. Hot is other than oneself, associated with revelation and grace, while cool is the essence of oneself. Structured teachings posit inherent order in the cosmos; there is something to be discovered and a way of discovering it. By contrast, in unstructured teachings, method and goal are identical and we are not separate from reality/truth/God. 'Jump!' (hot structured) is the opposite of 'Let Go!' (cool unstructured), just as 'Submit!' (hot unstructured) stands in contrast to 'Work!' (cool structured). How these variables apply in practice is most interesting and – yes – enlightening.

PAUL SIEVEKING



THE HEAD OF GOD
THE LOST TREASURE OF THE TEMPLARS
KEITH LAIDLER

Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London. 1998, hb £20.00, pp326, illus, index, bib, notes. ISBN 0–2978–4129–7

What do the Templars, Masons, Stone of Destiny, Akhenaton, Moses, Jesus Christ, Rosslyn Chapel, Head Worship, Ark of the Covenant, Priory of Sion, The Holy Grail and massive leaps of logic have in common? Answer, they are all to be found in this book.

The Head of God tries to show that the embalmed head of Jesus Christ is now buried beneath the Apprentice Pillar in Rosslyn Chapel, just outside Edinburgh. Firstly, Laidler establishes that a cult of head worship existed around the time of the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten (allegedly Moses) and that this creed continued down through the ages until the Templars rediscovered the head of Jesus whilst excavating the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. With the alleged demise of the Templars in the early 14th century, the Head was eventually placed in the crypt of Rosslyn.

Laidler is an easy read but, unfortunately, there are too many leaps of faith. Once an item is postulated, it is thereafter treated as fact; eg "It was the recorded intention of Sir William Sinclair to build Rosslyn as a Grail chapel." (p265) But upon checking the associated reference we find that this 'fact' comes from page 77 of *The Sword and The Grail* by Andrew Sinclair. When that reference is checked in turn, the statement is found to be unsupported conjecture by Sinclair. Laidler is not even self consistent; on page 224 he says that 89 per cent of the Templars confessed at their trial to spitting on the cross, whilst on page 225 the figure goes up to 97 per cent. Earlier in the book he places the founding of the Templars in the 10th Century instead of the 12th.

Ultimately this book was disappointing; a good bibliography and a literate style save it from the worst of this genre and, if you can agree with the authors reasoning, you will find it a good read. Unfortunately, I cannot.

GORDON RUTTER

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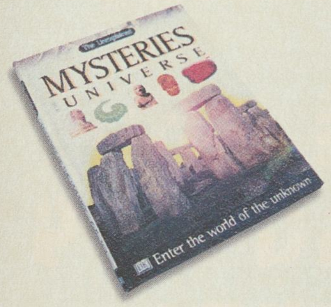
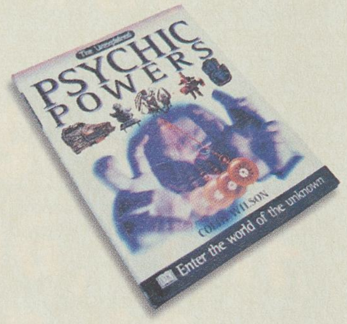


MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE
COLIN WILSON

ISBN 0–7513–5648–4



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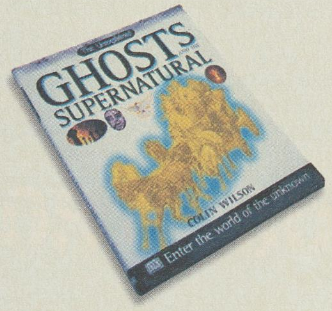


GHOSTS AND THE SUPERNATURAL
COLIN WILSON

ISBN 0–7513–5682–4

All by: Dorling Kindersley, 9 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2 8PS. 1998, Hb, £7.99, pp37, Index, photos, illus.

In recent years, Dorling Kindersley has gained an enviable reputation for producing high quality illustrated factual books and CD-ROMs for youngsters. With these volumes – part of their originally titled series *The Unexplained* – they embark on fortean territory.

These are hardly definitive treatments of their topics; typically, poltergeists, for example, covers two facing pages, containing half a dozen classic cases summed up in 50 words and a picture, topped off by an introduction of similar length. There is no room for any evaluation and very little indication of how reliable the tales are, so that black holes appear to be of equal standing as the supposed remains of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat.

The pictures, as you'd expect, are large, superbly presented and glossily printed – but most waste space and don't add anything to the text. There are a scattering of genuinely mysterious images, such as polt photos and stills from the Patterson Bigfoot movie, but most are just engravings from old books, film stills, or stock images. Worse still, there is no clear differentiation between potentially real and fake; one particularly lurid film still is simply labelled "a werewolf transformed by the full moon". The target audience simply doesn't have the context to know this isn't genuine and these books do not give it.

At 37 pages long and £7.99 a pop, they are just a waste of money. All this would be bad enough if these books were being knocked out by production line hacks, but they are written by Colin Wilson. *Colin Wilson*! A man with so many excellent books to his name, including the massive tomes *Mysteries* and *The Occult*, classic volumes which were seminal steps in many a fortean's path of discovery.

Look Colin, mate, if you need cash this badly, give us a shout. I'm sure we'll be able to fix you up with a more fitting commission. I mean… this stuff! Please!

IAN SIMMONS

TIME TRAVELERS FROM OUR FUTURE
DR BRUCE GOLDBERG

Llewellyn Publications, St Paul, MN 55164-0383, USA. 1998, pb $12.98, pp225, index, bib. ISBN 1–5671–8307–7

Oh dear! The cover promise of an explanation for alien abductions quickly gives way to the conditional: "Could futuristic visitors be aiding our spiritual growth?" Given the current state of the world, I'm not surprised to learn that, to Goldberg, the "chrononauts" diddling our brains are synonymous with abducting aliens and guardian angels. That he could confuse all these (while promoting his method of self-hypnosis) is a measure of his philosophical bankruptcy and confusion. Goldberg gave up dentistry for hypnotherapy and we're told he's conducted over 33,000 regressions since 1974, the vein he's mined for this and 13 other books. No wonder he's an Art Bell regular. And to think trees were killed to bring you this credulous crap.

BOB RICKARD

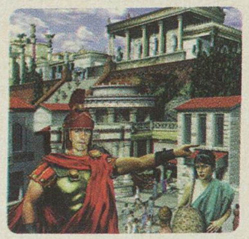
MULTIMEDIA

GAMES

VILLAGES OF THE DAMNED

ANNO 1602

Sunflowers/Infogrames, RRP £39.99, 1 CD

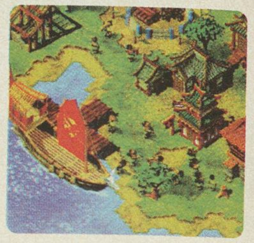


CAESAR 3

Cendant/Sierra, RRP £34.99 , 1 CD.

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING

Bullfrog/Electronic Arts, RRP £34.99, 2 CDs.



SETTLERS 3

Blue Byte, RRP £34.99, 2 CDs.

My name is Bob Rickard and I'm addicted to *Settlers*. The second version of the Blue Byte classic was a time-sponge. If around 100 missions (each lasting 10 hours or more) were not enough, they included a free map editor to make your own. Pure gameplay on a CD, it set a high standard for the 'god-simulator' game genre.

The basic idea is that you begin with a small and primitive colony in an unexplored landscape. Godlike, you take charge of their lives, explore, turn resources into industries and village huts into a mighty metropolis, helping your little people expand their territory, possibly making allies with other communities or conquering them.

The elements of resource development, progressive revelation and territorial campaigns were adopted imaginatively by other kinds of strategy game – *Populous*, *Civilization*, *Command & Conquer*, *X-com*, *Theme Park* and *SimCity*; each were classics of their kind, spinning off more variations such as *Theme Hospital, Railroad Tycoon* and *Starcraft*... the list is endless – and attention switched away from the original god-sim genre.

Now, over four years later, we are seeing a revival as four new titles establish new benchmarks for gameplay, sumptuous graphics, smooth animation, devilish AI, multiplayer options and less emphasis on violence. Three of them are third incarnations of a venerable series; only *Anno 1602* is wholly new. *Anno 1602* and *Settlers 3* are virtual rivals; both were developed in Germany and already have huge followings throughout Europe. *Populous* is British and *Caesar* comes from the US stable of Sierra.

Anno 1602 is, in some respects, what I expected the sequel to *Settler 2* to be, as most of its elements are improvements on *S2*. As in *Caesar*, you still have to build roads – they are vital to the distribution of food, raw materials and other supplies – and, although military conflicts matter further into the game, the focus of strategy is to master exploration, resource development, trading and diplomacy.

Settlers 3 makes a radical departure from its predecessor, abandoning the road system and adopting a more 3D look. Build a mine and a smelter and workers will 'know' to supply the miners with food and the smelter with ore. You can play as an Egyptian, Roman or Chinese god, your respective peoples having different abilities, professions, building types and missions; but the aim is still territorial supremacy. If your civilisation prospers, it can call on divine favours (like, yes, a rain of fishes).

Populous, too, has been reinvented. You battle for dominance of a small 3D planet – a sphere, really – by controlling an intermediary, a shaman with a huge armoury of spells. Besides house building and creating new land upon the watery globe, you can bring down natural catastrophes (like whirlwinds, meteors, lightning, etc) on your enemies. The god wrinkle here is that you have to create enough followers to worship your idols, as that generates the 'manna energy' that powers your spells and advances your status as a god.

Caesar 3 is more straightforward and less ambitious than the others but is greatly improved in scope and detail. As a provincial governor of the Roman Empire you have to found and develop a large and thriving city by managing its peoples, professions, diplomacy and defenses. The model economy AI is impressively detailed; eg set your taxes too high and your citizens demand more amenities, tradesmen emigrate and Caesar demands more tribute. You can play in two modes – perfect your city design or more aggressively set out to become the new Caesar.

ALL TOTALLY ENGROSSING

Each of these games is different and each totally engrossing. Their steep learning curves are mitigated by brilliant tutorials and training missions. What's fortean about them? Playing around with 'what if?' scenarios, the beauty of a balanced economy and the fascination of the ant-farm... well, they made this fortean very happy. I recommend these beautifully crafted games to all.

BOB RICKARD

COMPETITION 72

VILLAGES OF THE DAMNED

WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE EARLY ENGLISH COLONY IN VIRGINIA WHICH WAS FOUND COMPLETELY ABANDONED IN 1590?

Two lucky readers can kiss their lives goodbye by winning a fabulous bundle of all four games. One entry per person only, to reach us by 31 March, to the address on page 60.

MOVIE

ENEMY OF THE STATE

1998. Cert 15. 130min.
Dir: Tony Scott
Stars: Will Smith, Gene Hackman, Jon Voight

Tony Scott returns to film-making form with a typical Buckheimer in-your-face action thriller and the result is electrifying. Dean (Smith), a Washington lawyer, is drawn into a high-stakes game when a friend gives him a videotape of the NSA assassinating a senator. The NSA plants bugs in his clothes and phones, freezes his bank accounts and credit cards and plants smears about him in the media. As his life crumbles around him, he turns to ex-spook Brill (Hackman seemingly reprising his role as Harry McCall in *The Conversation*). Conspiracy in-jokes leaven the tension which builds to a suprising end. The cast is full of all too familiar faces which does detract from the plot, but Hackman lifts it into one of the best action films of the year. Remember – it's not paranoia if they're really after you.

JANE WATKINS

This Honduran girl had just survived the largest natural disaster to hit Central America this century. A mudslide wiped out her home in the Tegucigalpa hills. In a state of shock, she clings to her pet dog - she also clings to the hope that someone, somewhere will help.

The hurricane is over, the relief effort is just beginning.

The disaster may have happened in November, but the need for outside aid is more pressing as time goes by. The long-term effects could be catastrophic: fields are decimated and left infertile; bridges and roads have been swept aside; there is little uncontaminated water to drink and the threat of cholera and typhus is ever present. Whilst the people of Central America are very resilient and resourceful, they do need our help so that they can start to re-build their lives.

Don't let her down - please give what you can.

11,000 people are feared dead, many more are missing and millions are homeless. This advertising space itself has been donated by this magazine, so please donate what you can. There are so many people in Central America clinging to the hope that you will.

SHE HAS TWO THINGS LEFT TO CLING TO.

ONE IS HER PET DOG, THE OTHER IS THE HOPE THAT YOU'LL HELP.

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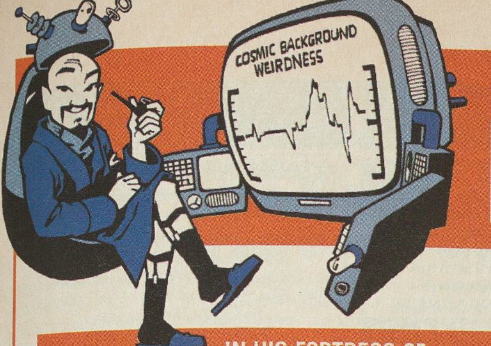
CHARLES HOY FORT
(1874–1932)

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'FORTEAN'?

FORTEAN TIMES is a monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents. It was founded in 1973 to continue the work of Charles Fort. Throughout his life, Fort was sceptical about scientific explanations, observing how scientists argued according to their own beliefs rather than the rules of evidence and that inconvenient data was ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away (which is quite different from explaining a thing).

Fort, born of Dutch stock in Albany, New York, spent many years researching scientific literature in the New York Public Library and the British Museum Library. He marshalled his evidence and set forth his philosophy in *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932).

His dictum "One measures a circle beginning anywhere" expresses his philosophy of Continuity in which everything is in an intermediate state between extremes. He had ideas of the universe-as-organism and the transient nature of all apparent phenomena. He coined the term 'teleportation' and was perhaps the first to speculate that mysterious lights seen in the sky might be craft from outer space. However, he cut at the very roots of credulity: "I conceive of nothing, in religion, science or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while."



THE HIEROPHANT

IN HIS FORTRESS OF ARROGANCE, DEEP BELOW THE HIMALAYAS, THE IMMORTAL ASCENDED MASTER KNOWN AS THE HIEROPHANT TRAVELS THE MORE DISREPUTABLE PATHS OF FORTEANA

It seems that one Mr Tony Blair, a Prime Minister, has been spending less time thinking about the Third Way and more time contemplating the Eightfold Path. According to various press reports, a Feng Shui practitioner named Rosalyn Dexter was invited to Number 10 recently, not to rub shoulders with the Gallagher brothers, but to suss out its suitability as a working environment. She found it generally agreeable, but felt that its south-facing door was a bad move. Another consultant, Sarah Shurety agreed, warning that Mr Blair could expect a visit from the "five ghosts" of burglary, fire, legal problems, domestic spats and unruly staff. This news sits interestingly with Cherie Booth's public appearence earlier in the year wearing some sort of mystical protection medallion. I'm tempted to nip off down to Downing Street myself, with a basket of lucky heather.

Meanwhile, politicos across the Irish Sea are dabbling in the more traditional waters of astrology; the Irish News (Belfast) recently gave a brief rundown of the horoscope of a leading local figure. See if you can guess who they're talking about; the answer's at the end of the column, and no peeking. Our subject is "reserved and resilient", "ruthless yet romantic". Thanks to his moon-Saturn square (it says here) he is sober, melancholy, reserved and withdrawn, and is "prepared to forgo pleasure and comfort in pursuit of his aims and ambitions". The Sun in Libra shows his romantic side, while he is assured that 1999 will be a calm year, with a promise of "greater fulfilment in his private life". Now get thinking!

You may remember that some months ago I brought you news of the Bologna conference of the Association of Autonomous Astronauts. I am pleased to say that I hear the weekend went splendidly, with a surprise appearence from a new Italian grouping known as the Men in Red, who advocate that the world's workers should unite with alien intelligence to bring about the downfall of capitalism. Soon after, an AAA event in London saw them take a practical step towards their stated aim of a rave in space by carrying out tests on the practicality of DJing in a space suit. Initial findings suggest that "operating the cross-fader proved tricky with the large fingers on the gloves... either the gloves will have to be made smaller or the controls bigger".

The Hierophant was, sadly, unable to attend another recent gathering of would-be autonomous astronauts. The very wonderful Unarius Academy of Science held a one-day "Interplanetary Symposium" at their California base in October in preparation for the arrival of our Pleiadean space brothers in 2001 AD. Attendees could see – "first-hand"! – the "Future Landing Site of the Spacecraft", the "Colorful Interplanetary Banner Procession" and "the release of 33 white doves, signalling peace on Earth!" This is, however, as nothing to the promised after-dinner entertainment: "Live Contact With a Space Brother", which will, we are assured, "leave you in a transcended and peace-filled state of mind!" Lest we become panicked by these wonders, they pause to reassure us that "There is no fear but the fear of fear, which is the unresolved nature of past-life negative traumas!" Well worth $135 of anybody's money.

The relentless tide of musical forteana continues unabated. In a new book entitled *Ripples*, one Jenny Smedley lays out the case for her having been married, in a previous life, to country and western star Garth Brooks. After a revelatory experience while watching Garth on TV, Ms Smedley realised that this was none other than Ryan Fitzgerald, the loving man who had been "torn from her arms" slightly under 400 years previously. She was, understandably, relieved to find that Mr Fitzgerald's soul was keeping well after all these years. Soon afterwards, she launched her own career as a country songwriter and moved to Nashville. Even better, she reports that since her experiences, she no longer fears dental treatment: "I hadn't been for 10 years... Last week I went and had a large filling done with no trouble at all," she told a no-doubt breathless reporter.

Well spotted everybody, our mystery horoscope subject was none other than Mr Gerry Adams MP. Give yourself a pat on the back.

IF YOU HAVE A LEAD ON ANY PARANORMAL GOSSIP, SHARE IT WITH THE HIEROPHANT
hierophant@johnbrown.co.uk

PHIL BOND

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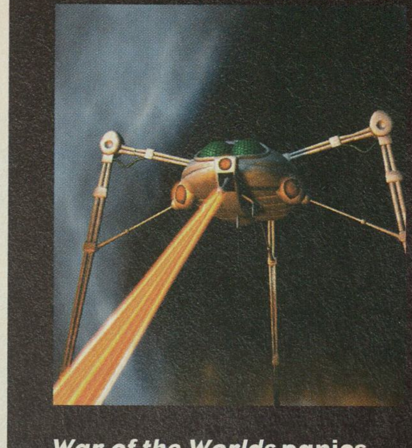
MARS ATTACKS!



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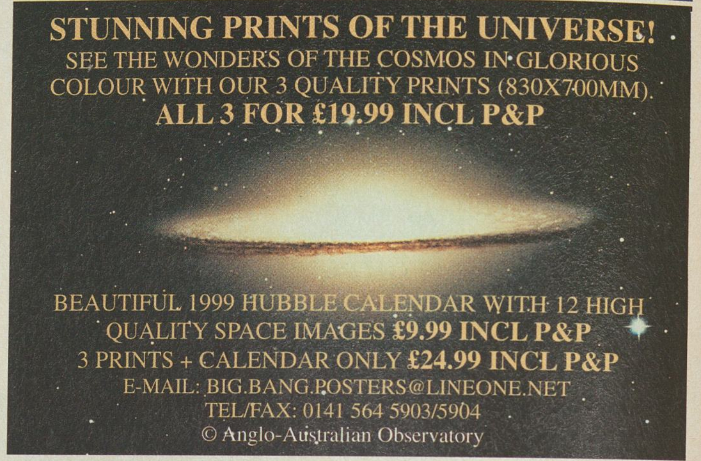

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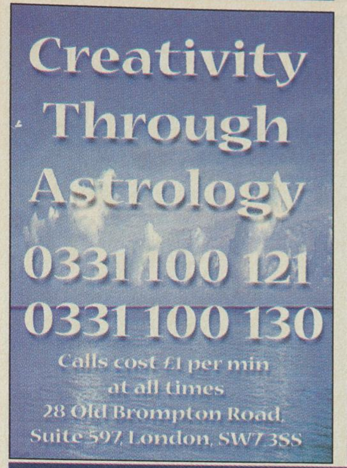

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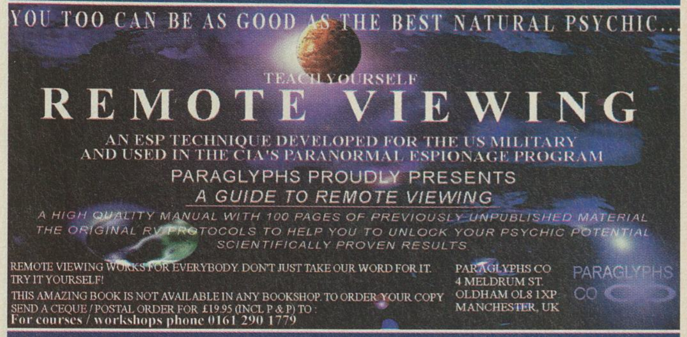

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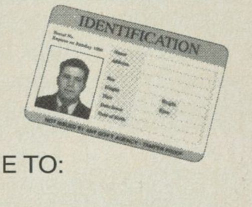

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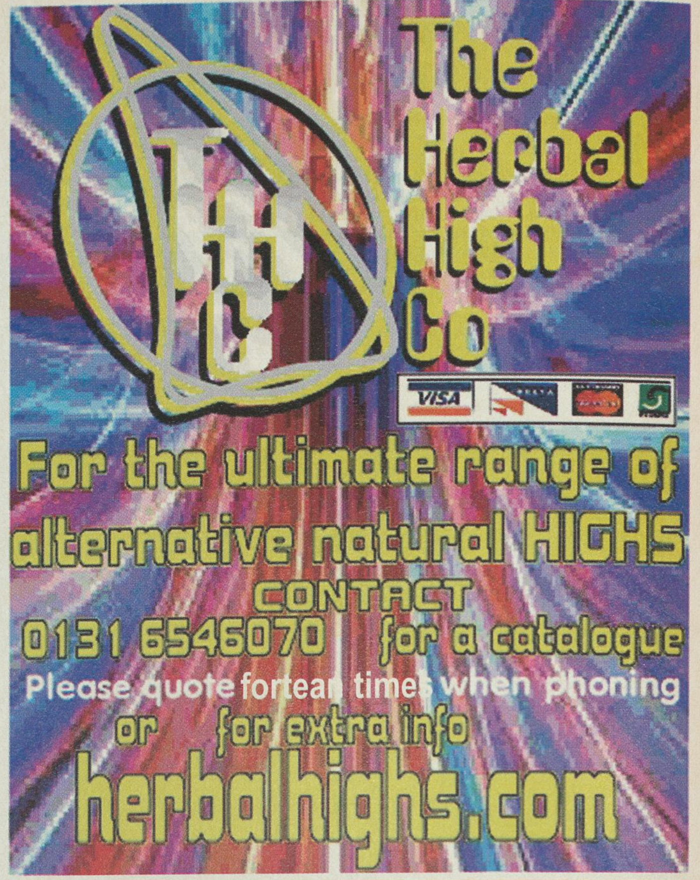

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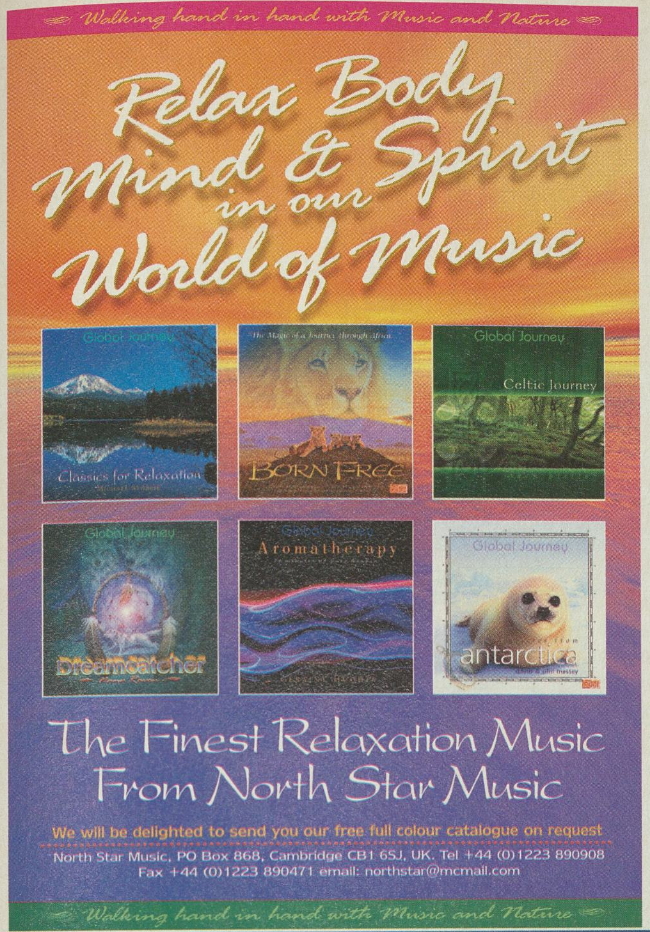

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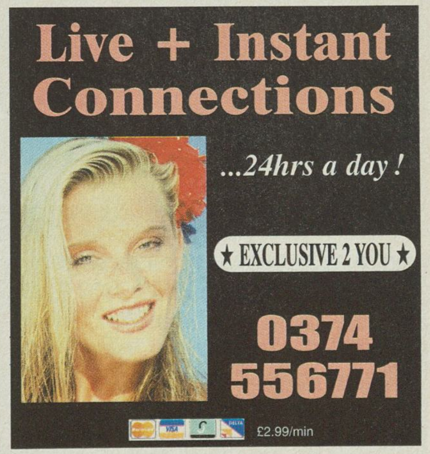

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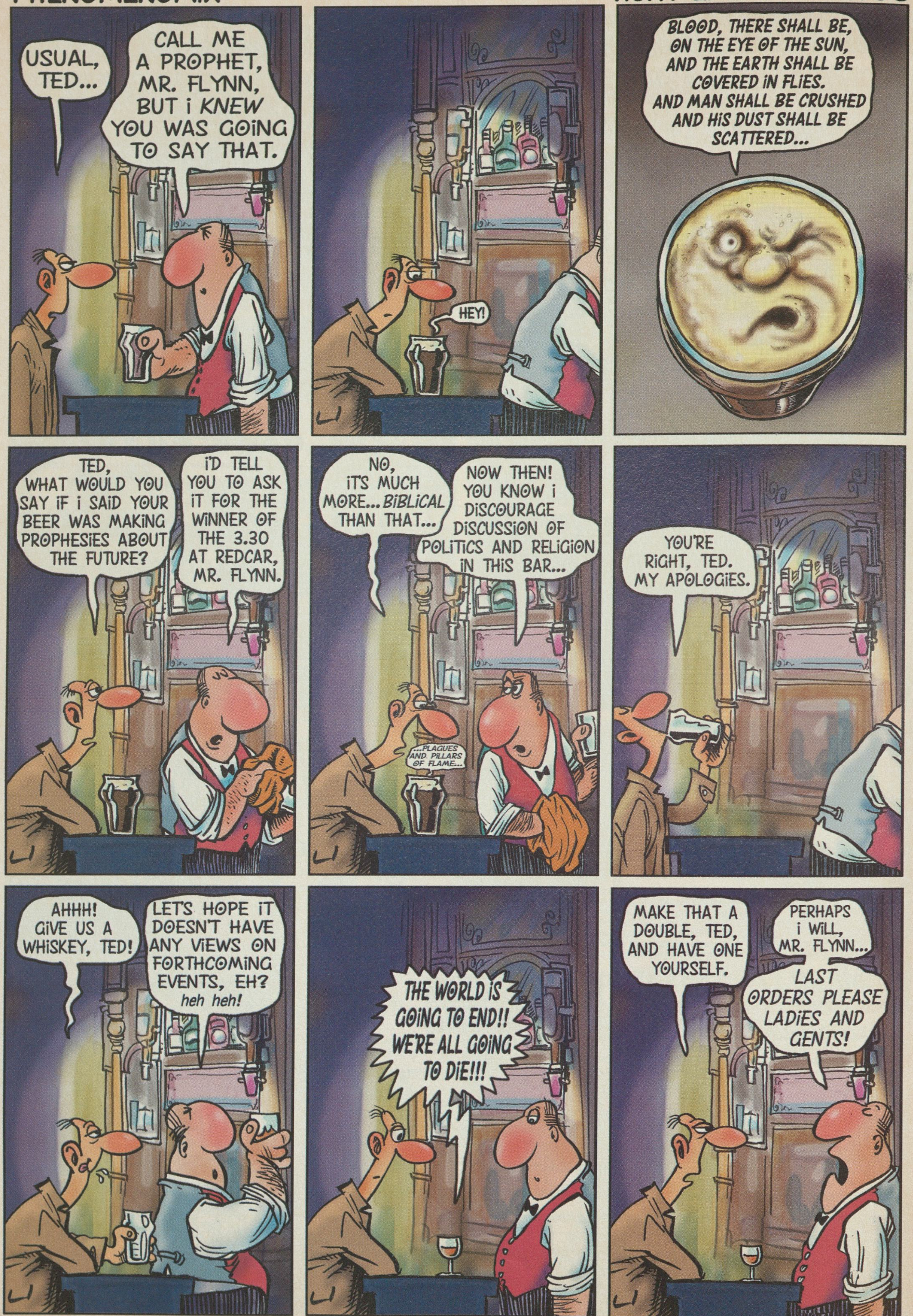
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I'D TELL YOU TO ASK IT FOR THE WINNER OF THE 3.30 AT REDCAR, MR. FLYNN.
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NOW THEN! YOU KNOW I DISCOURAGE DISCUSSION OF POLITICS AND RELIGION IN THIS BAR...
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AHHH! GIVE US A WHISKEY, TED!
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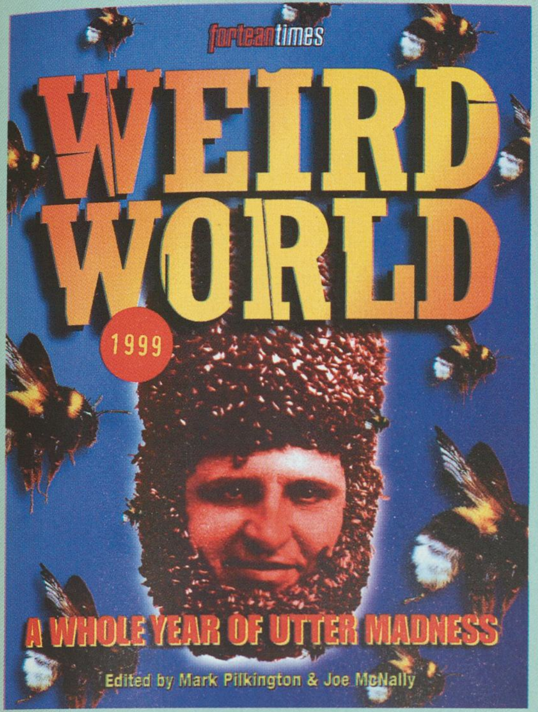
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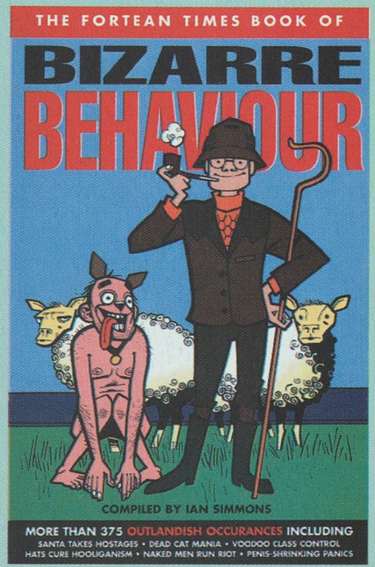
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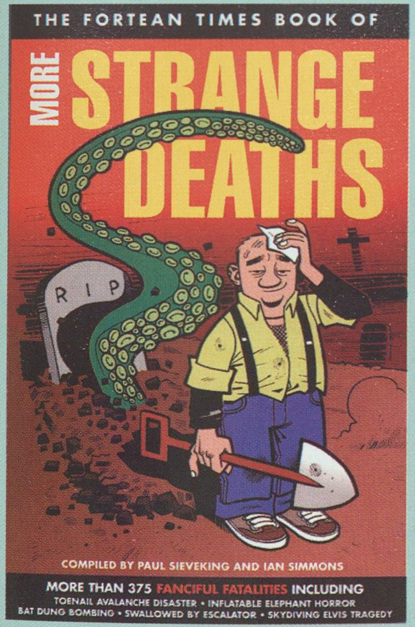
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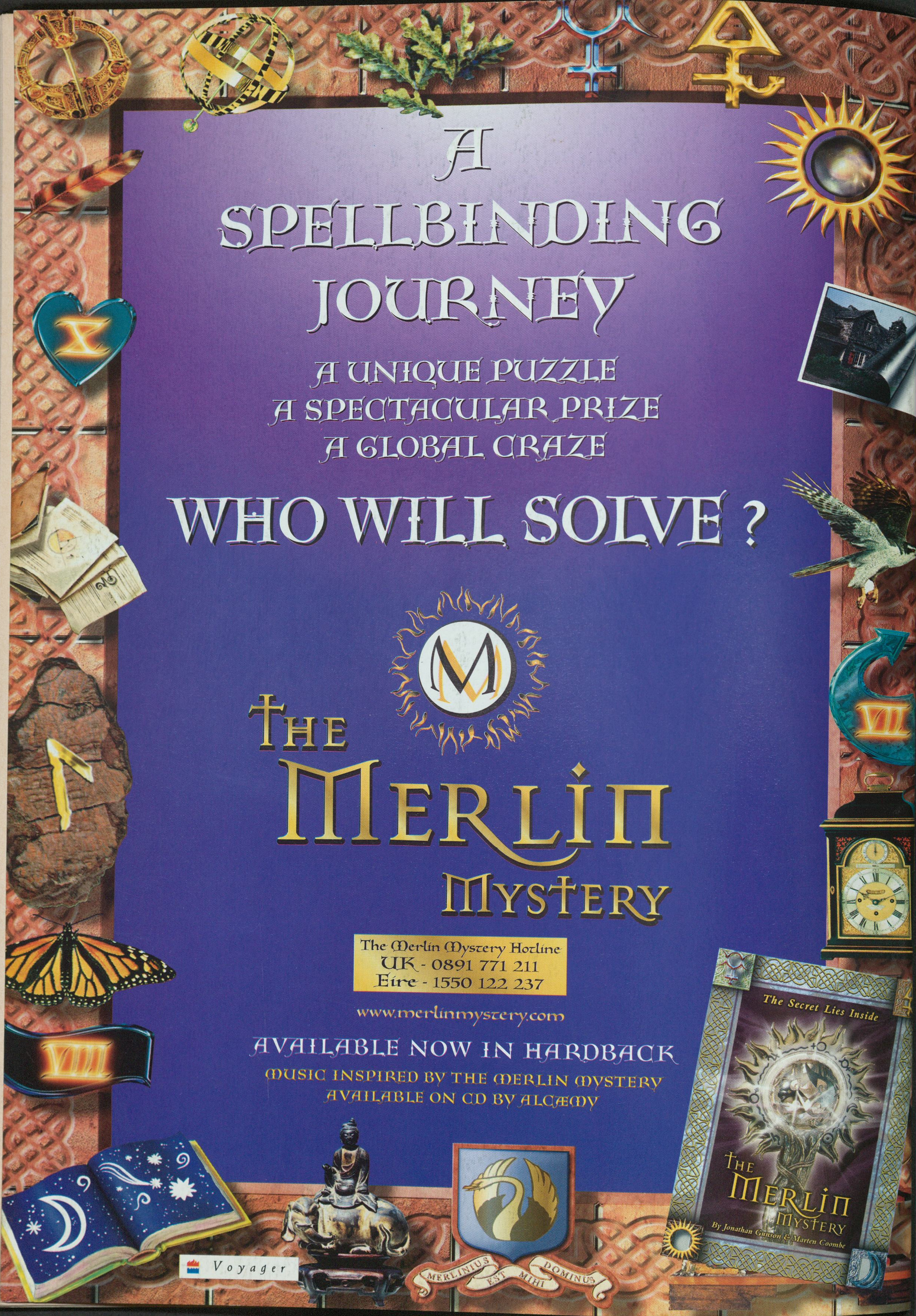

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AWAITING THE KING OF TERROR

As we enter the last year of the millennium, Joe McNally finds out that the end of the world may be closer than we think.

T.S. Eliot famously said that the world would end not with a bang, but a whimper. This is scarcely less odd than some of the ends of the world which have been predicted for the years around 2000.

The American prophet Edgar Cayce, who died in 1945, made a great many predictions about future disasters. He claimed that around the year 2000, the Earth's poles will undergo a cataclysmic shift, leading to worldwide disaster. He also claimed that by 1998, most of Japan and large portions of the USA would have sunk into the sea, so perhaps we can sleep easy.

ALEXANDER TOMLINSON

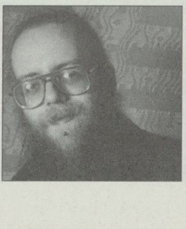
In the 16th century, Michel de Notre Dame - better known as Nostradamus - wrote nearly a thousand four-line verses, or “quatrains”, which many believe were an attempt to predict the future. One of the most famous seems to predict the arrival of a “King of Terror” from the east in “the year 1999 the seventh month”. Since Nostradamus's writing tends to be cryptic at the best of times, exactly what this meant is still the subject of some debate. One scholar takes a reference to Mongolia to mean that the King of Terror is Genghis Khan, resurrected by extraterrestrial technology.

More recently, in 1979, a group of people founded the village of Stelle, Illinois, for the sole purpose of awaiting the apocalypse, which they reckoned would arrive in May 2000. Around that time, five planets are supposed to align with each other in such a way that cataclysmic volcanic activity will be triggered. They also expected a “final war” to begin in 1998. To avoid all this nastiness, they planned to build a fleet of lighter than air flying saucers which would let them fly to the Pacific when the Big One kicked off.

The Yorkshire prophet Mother Shipton is credited with dozens of forecasts, very few of which were actually made by her. An edition of “her” prophecies was published in England in 1850 which included the prediction that “The world to an end will come/In eighteen hundred and eighty-one.” When 1881 came and went without any noticeable end to the world, it was quickly realised that Mother Shipton obviously meant “In *nineteen* hundred and eighty one.” Or, subsequently, 1991. You don't hear much about her these days, oddly.

End of the world prophecies are extremely popular on the fringes of American politics and religion. Evangelist Texe Marrs is currently warning his flock that the “millennium bug” - which might cause large numbers of electronic devices to fail as the millennium arrives - is part of God's plan for the world, and that it will quickly cause the downfall of modern society. Texe is so committed to this belief that he sells emergency supplies of all kinds on his website so the righteous can be prepared.

Whatever happens, one group of people are certain to see in the Millennium with a bang. An Israeli science fiction society will be holding a party starting at the stroke of midnight at a hotel in the valley of Meggido - the site of the battle of Armageddon. There'll probably be a few people *wishing* the world would end the next morning.



Photography by Lisa Anders

Joe McNally is one of Fortean Times' Contributing Editors.

MAILING ALL OVER THE WORLD

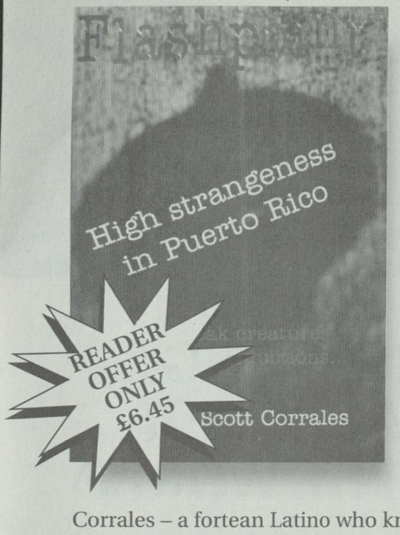
Contributing Editor Ian Simmons extols the virtues of a daily dose of forteana.

So, you are a *FT* subscriber with email, and somehow a once-monthly fix of forteana just isn't enough anymore - you want it every day. Well, fear not - help is at hand - the fortean mailing list is waiting for you.

Possibly the liveliest fortean forum in the known universe, often generating over 100 messages a day, it is a permanent electronic unconvention, featuring input from familiar fortean faces like Bob Rickard, Loren Coleman, Andrew Dennis and Jon Downes, plus an energetic collection of feral mycologists, worm experts, lawyers and forteans from all walks of life, many of who have transferred from the list to the pages of *FT* itself. It covers every possible topic known to Forteana, as well as quite a few not. More a discussion of things of interest to forteans than a rigid diet of fortean fact (although there's plenty of that too) it is one of the net's most fascinating hang outs, somewhat akin to going down the pub every night with a bunch of fortean pals.

Usually even tempered and upbeat, forteana suffers fewer flame wars and ugly factional convulsions than most lists and guarantees a flow of fascinating facts, fortean analysis, discussion and sometimes plain hallucination into your mailbox each time you open it. Subscribers end up knowing more than they could possibly imagine about things they could not have possibly imagined before they signed up - only one golden rule don't shout “but it's not fortean!” about anything, you'd be amazed what we've found useful over the years.

So where do you find us? Simply send an email reading “Subscribe forteana” to Majordomo@primenet.com, with no subject heading, and wait. Within a few days our esteemed list manager will have you hooked up. See you on the list!



FLASHPOINT:

High Strangeness In Puerto Rico

Scott Corrales

Puerto Rico is small: only 100 miles long by 35 miles wide. Yet, its mysteries are endless; as colourful and varied as its trees and flowers. There is much to this "Island of Enchantment" that attracts the roaming eye–including the military. Besides natural beauty, Puerto Rico has strategic value; it is one of 20 key American naval installations in the world. That this military presence on the island converges with aerial and bestial mysteries has never been lost on forteans–certainly not ones astute as Scott Corrales.

Corrales – a fortean Latino who knows Puerto Rico better than the back of a chupacabras' hand – acknowledges that the island's schizophrenic political identity makes it ripe for exploitation. For example, Puerto Rico is riddled with caves – some stretching for miles. Such caves, he speculates, could easily be exploited for use as natural test pits for detonating nuclear bombs. And not just nuclear. "An entire series of 'advanced technology weapons'," he writes, "could be tested with ease on, above or below the island with little or no previous notice."

And what about the scores of UFOs reported over the El Yunque Rainforest? Deliberate maskings of American-bankrolled black projects? Are there mundane explanations for the reports of human disappearances within El Yunque as well? Perhaps... though Corrales is sensible to keep the door ajar on extraterrestrial or interdimentional speculation – especially when confronting creditable cases involving humanoid and non-human entities.

Corrales has done an absolutely superb job in cataloguing Puerto Rico's rich legacy of high–strangeness. Marvellously readable, and briskly susspenful, the book comes with a useful index and case chronology.

Amarna Ltd. 1998, pb £6.95 pp 195, illus, index, chronology.
ISBN 1-902219-02-3

THIS JUST IN

SEEDS OF THE FUTURE

Controversial human cloning proponent Dr Richard Seed (who has no actual medical license, but three Harvard degrees) plans to open an animal cloning and human fertility clinic on Japan's Hokkaido island by next August. Japan has expressed less concern over the ethical status of clones, human or animal, than most other countries, and is also looking to use cloning techniques to boost its flagging domestic cattle industry.

Seed, who has ties to the Rael UFO cult - whose beliefs partly revolve around a cloned future for humankind - has so far raised about 75 per cent of the necessary funds.

He originally announced his intention to clone himself, but has since decided to clone his wife, Gloria, instead. The process will take at least two years. "People say if I clone myself it would be an ego trip," he explained. South China *Morning Post, 2 Dec 1998*

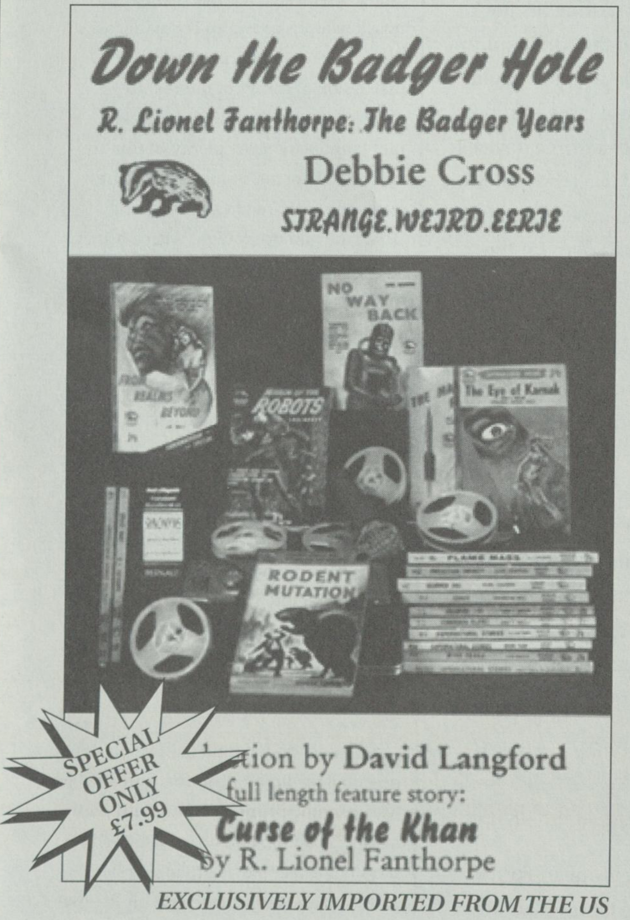
FALL GUYS

On 29 November, 21-year-old Andrew Mckay fell off the same pedestrian bridge over the M8 at Riddrie, Glasgow, that his brother David, 17, had plummeted from on 3 October. Andrew was sitting on the handrails of the bridge when he appeared to lose his balance and fall. *Times, Mirror, 30 Nov 1998*

LETTING THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG

Opening his suitcase in a Montreal hotel room, British Airways employee John Pearson was shocked to discover a sleepy cat at the bottom of it. Worse, it was his own four-year-old persian, Katie, last seen at home in Chiswick, West London, 3,200 miles away.

Katie was fine, despite her voyage in the hold of a Boeing 777, and was returned to England for a six month stay in quarantine. It's thought that she evaded detection by airport security and X ray machines because she was inside a heavy jacket. *Times, 5 Dec 1998*



EXCLUSIVELY IMPORTED FROM THE US

DOWN THE BADGER HOLE

Debbie Cross

Most UK readers will know the Reverend Lionel Fanthorpe as the face of Fortean TV , while others will be familiar with his fortean and religious tomes; but there are many more strings to the good Father's bow.

Between 1954 and 1966 about 168 of them were published by the Badger imprint of publishers John Spencer & Co. (not to be confused with the better-known UFO author). Under a number of assumed names - some, like Pel Torro and Deutero Spartacus, highly improbable in themselves - the Rev transported readers to new dimensions of strange, there to confront "the million incalculables that form part of the everlasting gear wheels of the rotating cylinders of if".

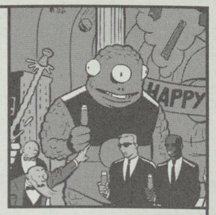
Prepare to face giant beavers ("Mutated beaver's pretty good. But mutated beavers that can telepath and teleport are really something"); super-intelligent Yeti with "bizarre respiratory inlets"; and unpronounceable future languages: ""Hmmmm"; the monosyllable was vibrant with meaning. "Hmm," he said again."

Rodent Mutation, Negative Minus, Galaxy 666 and the many, many others enjoy legendary status within esoteric SF circles, and reading the edited highlights presented here it's easy to see why. Spawned from titles and covers and dictated into a tape recorder in the space of a week – often under the bed sheets for full atmospheric effect – these impossible, uncanny tales will make your head spin "like a minute ball on the roulette board of Destiny". Imagine, if you will, what "an intelligent blood corpuscle would feel when caught in the circulation and fed unceremoniously through a palpitating aorta" and you'll be some way to understanding what I'm on about.

Down the Badger Hole gives a new generation the opportunity to chew over some of the most mind-boggling prose ever to appear between lurid yellow covers. These perplexing nuggets of joy will leave you gasping at the ingenuity, imagination and sheer gall of the mind from which they sprung. For these are the works of a true "mental grasshopper, an intellectual kangaroo, a mind wallaby". Read it and weep. Then read it again, just to make sure that it's real. The funniest book we've seen in a long long time.

Wrigley Cross Books. 1997, pb $12.50
pp 168, illus, index, biblio.

UNCONVENTION99



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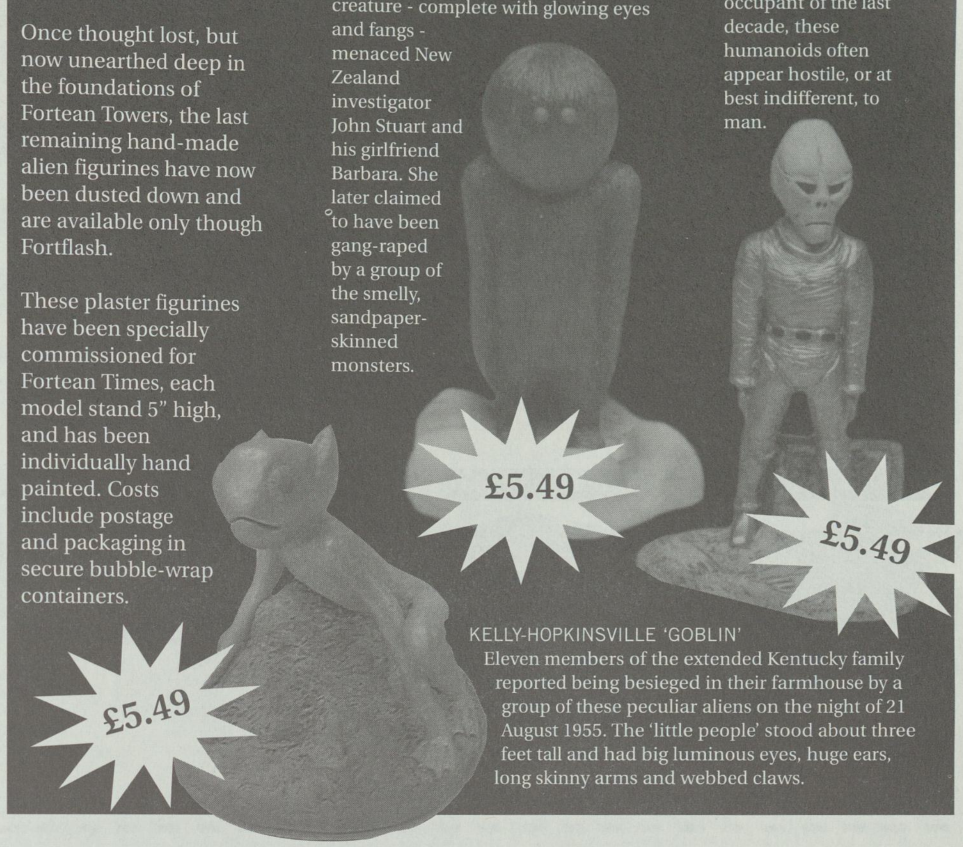
BOOKING DETAILS

RETURN OF THE INVADERS!

Once thought lost, but now unearthed deep in the foundations of Fortean Towers, the last remaining hand-made alien figurines have now been dusted down and are available only though Fortflash.

These plaster figurines have been specially commissioned for Fortean Times, each model stand 5" high, and has been individually hand painted. Costs include postage and packaging in secure bubble-wrap containers.



ALIEN SEX BEAST
Although much less commonly reported than the greys, furry humanoid UFOnauts have been spotted many times in the last 40 years. One such creature - complete with glowing eyes and fangs - menaced New Zealand investigator John Stuart and his girlfriend Barbara. She later claimed to have been gang-raped by a group of the smelly, sandpaper-skinned monsters.

GREY
The classic modern alien abductor. By far the most commonly-reported UFO occupant of the last decade, these humanoids often appear hostile, or at best indifferent, to man.

KELLY-HOPKINSVILLE 'GOBLIN'
Eleven members of the extended Kentucky family reported being besieged in their farmhouse by a group of these peculiar aliens on the night of 21 August 1955. The 'little people' stood about three feet tall and had big luminous eyes, huge ears, long skinny arms and webbed claws.

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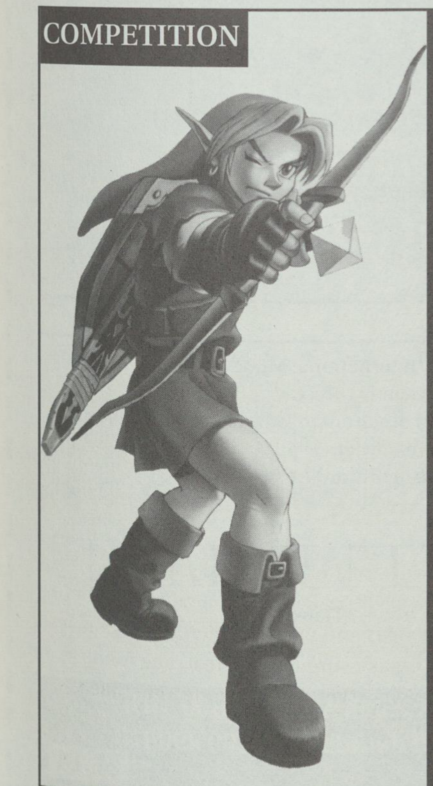
COMPETITION



WIN A NINTENDO 64

console plus a copy of *The Legend of Zelda: Orcarina of Time* the ground-breaking new game from Nintendo in this exclusive Fortflash competition.

The Nintendo 64 is the world's fastest game system, and *The Legend of Zelda* is the most advanced game to hit this ground-breaking platform.

In the game you play the part of the young Link, an elfin boy from the magical Kokiri Forest, and the young Princess Zelda's only hope of salvation. An evil being of immense power covets the sacred relic that will give him the ultimate might, the Triforce. You must race against time to find the keys to the legendary Sacred Realm where the Triforce is kept. Fail, and the fair land of Hyrule and all its peoples will fall into a Dark Age of destruction.

All you have to do to enter the competition is answer the following question:

Elves Chasm can be found at what location?
A. Milton Keynes B. Grand Canyon C. Primrose Hill

Answers on a postcard to: Fortflash Competition, *Fortean Times*, John Brown Publishing, 136 - 142 Bramley Road, London, W10 6SR. The closing date is 12 March 1999.

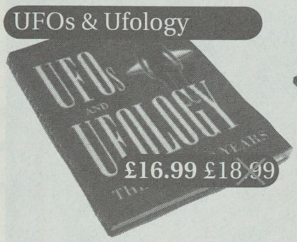
Winning copies of *Babylon 5: Thirdspace* in the competition from Fortflash 13 were: Mrs Joan Aldridge from Norwich; Steve Lennox in Stoke on Trent; Lisa Gledhill from Grantham; Ms C R Gill in Southampton, and Iain Black from Edinburgh. All the winners knew that Bruce Boxleitner starred in *The Scarecrow and Mrs King* with Kate Jackson.

FORTEAN BOOKSHELF SPECIAL OFFERS

BEST POSSIBLE OFFERS ON BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY FT'S WRITERS.

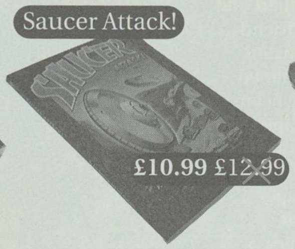
Due to popular demand, we have put together another batch of special offers on previous Fortflash books. These offers are exclusive to subscribers and make excellent purchases for anyone wishing to add to the forteana in their book collections. Please note we have a limited stock of these books.

UFOs & Ufology



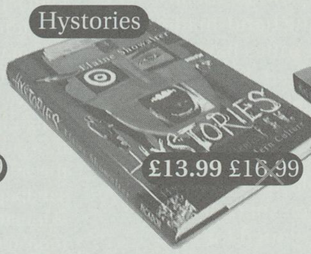
Impressive stuff, and essential for any ufologist worthy of the name

Saucer Attack!



Glorious compilation of pop ephemera related to the 1950s "Golden Age" of UFOs.

Hystories



Examination of hysterical epidemics in modern culture.

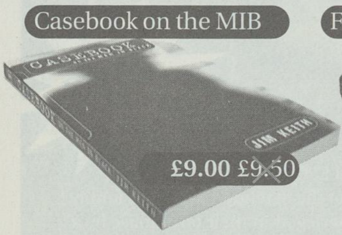
Mind Invaders

A reader in psychic warfare and semiotic terrorism.

Alien Contact

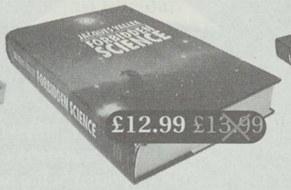
Jenny Randles' history of the first 50 years of Ufology.

Casebook on the MIB



All you need to know about Men In Black by Jim Keith.

Forbidden Science

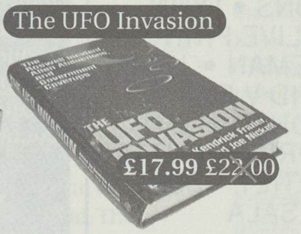


Jacques Vallee's classic hardback on his involvement in US Government UFO research.

In Search Of The Light

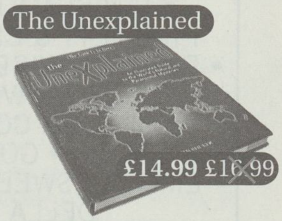
Susan Blackmore's investigation of parapsychology.

The UFO Invasion



A sceptical observation of the Roswell incident, alien abductions and government coverups.

The Unexplained



Karl Shuker's comprehensive guide to our world of weirdness

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